AMTIX!

20
Cartwou

A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION
No.10 August 1986
£1

MONTHLY SOFTWARE REVIEW FOR THE
AMSTRAD COMPUTER

HANDS UP FOR
CAULDRON II
Palace Software

WE GET TO GRIPS
WITH
BUDGET
SOFTWARE
IS IT ALL
IT CRACKS ITSELF UP TO BE?

SPOILT FOR JOYCE

We take a look at
some of the new choice
Joyce goodies

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THRILL
BUDGET

MAPPED HEAVY ON THE MAGICK

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* A HOLOGRAM *
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AMTIX!

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A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION

THE MAIN HEADINGS

5 EDITORIAL
Malcy welcomes a veritable host of new AMTIX! people

6 ON THE SPOT
Your letters get aired and answered

31 AMTECH
Educational LOGO, Meddler, Memory Boss, Brunword, Toolkit and others all queue up to be looked at

46 AMTIPS
Julian Rignall offers up help to the needy and needles to the helpless with more playing tips plus a map of HEAVY ON THE MAGICK

62 ADVENTURE
Three foot four of mystical power, Leapin' Leprechaun Masterson reviews some new adventures and arcanes a bit

74 NEWS
The team check out the last London Amstrad show and find few games but loads of interest

77 STRATEGY
Growing a fraction taller to look more menacing, Sean Masterson espouses on how strategies should be written

82 CHARTS/HI SCORES

80 COMPETITION RESULTS

95 THE TERMINAL MAN
Cross and the wrecked Arcadians continue their quest for understanding

AMTIX! COMPETITIONS

45 TOLKIEN BONANZA!
Melbourne House celebrate LORD OF THE RINGS and THE HOBBIT by offering a Night Raider hologram and copies of the games

53 EQUINOX
Join MIKRO-GEN in this exciting comp and win, win, win!

61 JEWELS OF DARKNESS
£200 worth of jewellery could be yours, courtesy of Rainbird and Level 9

79 A MINION'S REVENGE
Help a deserving cause with BEYOND in our DOOMDARK'S REVENGE comp

TOP GAMES FOR AUGUST

14 CAULDRON II
Palace do it again with a lively new sequel and get an Accolade

18 HARVEY HEADBANGER
Firebird's budget bash em up with a difference makes an alchoholic Accolade too

92 NODES OF YESOD
The famous platform seek and destroy game from Odin hits the Amstrad

EXTRA! EXTRA! THE WITCH HAS FLOWN IN AND BROUGHT US A MAP OF CAULDRON II ! ON PAGES 58+59

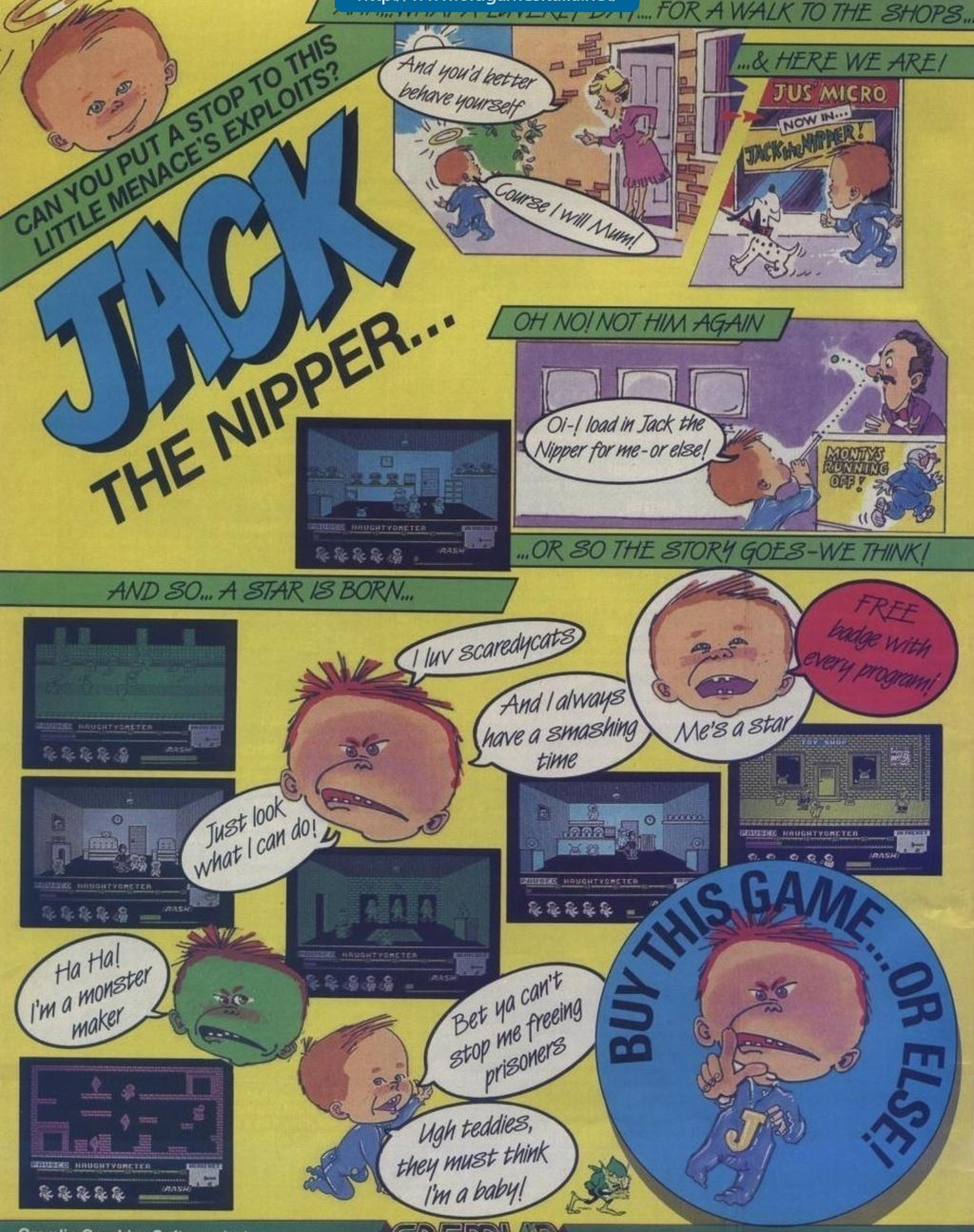
AUGUST SPECIALS

39 SPOILT FOR JOYCE
Our special Joyce section kicks off this month with some news of the astonishing growth of software for the machine, plus an in-depth review of MONEY MAKER

54 SPLINTERS OF MAGIK
Sean Masterson talks to the Austins about Level 9

83 BUDGET SPECIAL
The reviewing team ask whether budget games are all they're cracked up to be by reviewing several new offerings

The next issue of AMTIX! goes on sale from 21st August, and if you think things are hot at the moment, they'll be a lot hotter if you aren't at your newsagents to buy it!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JACK THE NIPPER...
And you'd better behave yourself
Course I will Mum!
...& HERE WE ARE!
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NOW IN...
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OH NO! NOT HIM AGAIN
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MONTY'S RUNNING OFF!
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I luv scaredycats
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ARE YOU TOO MUCH OF A WIMP TO PLAY THIS

AMTIX!

THE BIG NON EVENT

Everyone thought it would appear at the show but it didn't! Doesn't make sense unless you know that IT is Amstrad's IBM PC compatible machine. It's common knowledge the company had originally intended to launch the new micro either at the June Amstrad Show or the PC User Show in July but technical problems have delayed the machine's debut. Even so it is believed the PC will be available as scheduled in September.

The general opinion is initial machines will use Digital Research's Gem graphics running under the Dos Plus operating system but it appears there has been some problem compressing Gem down sufficiently.

On the subject of the show it was quite amazing just how much serious software there was on sale for the PCW8256 and to a limited extent also for the fat Joyce.

Of the 80 exhibitors at the show at least 20 had only recently boarded the Amstrad bandwagon and between them they actually launched 120 new products.

It is also quite amazing what some people will do to get publicity in the national press. **Derek Meakin**, director of Database who organises the show, made one of the tabloids when he revealed that his decision to re-arrange the show for Friday the 13th of June had resulted in no less than 13 mishaps. According to Mr Meakin his run of calamities started with three key members of staff breaking their legs in separate incidents within seven days. Then two telephonists went down with flu; a cashier had to cancel plans for the show because of family illness; one of the show drivers lost his license in court; and the replacement got stuck on the motorway for five hours when his van broke down. Never mind, Derek, it's much more fun than running a magazine!

Originally the show was to have been a two day event, starting on May 31, but such was the demand for space that it was extended to a three day show on two floors. 'I'm not normally superstitious, and at first I laughed it off, but now I am starting to think that maybe it does pay to believe in the supernatural,'he said.

Anyway despite all the mumbo jumbo about superstitions the show proved to be another huge success and no doubt the next three day event, planned in October will be equally successful. In the meantime it will be interesting to see how many software companies climb on the Joyce bandwagon and convert existing games to run on the 8256 or 8512. Ocean have wasted no time and their version of *Batman* is very good indeed as is reported in the Joyce section of Amtech.

NEW FACES FOR AMTIX!

The AMTIX! Team has grown enormously in just one day. Monday dawned as usual in AMTIX! Towers, sticky and coffeeless, and then this horde just walked in off the street, headed by someone calling himself Lee Paddon. Behind him trogged and thin bespectacled young man who turned out to be Anthony Clarke, and behind him was Richard Eddy. Who are they?

LEE PADDON

Lee hails from somewhere south of the biggest smoke, London, where he was (until this particular Monday) Deputy Editor of *Your Computer* magazine, a steamed organ for which he has worked for some years. Mr Paddon takes over as Software Editor for AMTIX! and my bath chair attendant. It's important to know what people are about, and when asked Lee said, 'I have a wife and Siamese cat to support, as well as a drink habit.' When pushed he admitted that *Elite* was probably his favourite game, but a few weeks at AMTIX! should soon cure it (the drink habit I mean).

ANTHONY CLARKE

Has until this particular Monday morning, been a regular contributor to Amtech pages, churning out the stuff on his trusty typewriter someplace to the left of Nottingham. Now he's resident at the Ludlow Waif Trust House along with half the rest of Newsfield employees. Anthony (18) is taking over as Technical Editor, which is just as well because he's clever with machine code, hex and decimals which no one else knows anything about. He also writes games, but we don't hold that against him.

RICHARD EDDY

Comes from Cornwall, which is a long way off, and since the commuter fare was more than his salary we asked him to move up to Ludlow. He's also 18 — just (having got the job by lying about his age, the sort of lad who would have joined up for the war before his time), and Richard (or Dick Edd, as he's already called) will be part of the in-house reviewing team, with special duties in replacing Gary Liddon in the Tea Room). Gary Liddon has left Newsfield to become Technospert for Newsfield's new software house **Thalamus**. As a result, he's not allowed to write reviews anymore!

I hope everyone will settle in quickly because there's another issue of AMTIX! to get off fast, so it's down to serious work NOW!

Malcolm Harding

GAMES REVIEWED

Biggles Mirrorsoft	25
Dr Who Micropower	26
Ghosts 'n Goblins Elite	17
Green Beret Imagine	22
Harvey Headbanger Firebird	18
Kung Fu Master US Gold	28
Night Gunner Digital Integration	91
Nodes of Yesod Odin	92
Powerplay Arcana	12
Room Ten CRL	13
Sai Combat Mirrorsoft	21
Shadowfire Beyond	16
V Ocean	27

BUDGET GAMES

Barchou Central Solutions	90
Classic Invaders Bubble Bus	86
Darts Blue Ribbon	88
Kane Mastertronic	86
Molecule Man Mastertronic	88
Radzone Mastertronic	90
Snodgits Sparklers	85
Spiky Harold Firebird	87
Voodo Range Antartic	87
Wild Bunch Firebird	85

ADVENTURE

Acheton Newstar	63
Blackstar CRL	63
Hunchback Ocean	68
Nocturne Alpha-Omega	64
QOR Maltdale	67
SAS Raid CRL	62
Wrath of Olympus Alpha/Omega	64

ADVERTISERS' INDEX

AMTIX! Subscriptions	94
AMTIX! Shirts/Binders	81
Ariolasoft	23
Beyond	65
Cascade	89
CRL	57
Design Design	42
Gremlin Graphics	4
Infogrames	20
Level 9	100
Ocean	10, 11
Palace Software	49
Quicksilva	24, 60
SJB Disks	35
US Gold	29, 99
Virgin	2, 30

THE MONTHLY SOFTWARE STAR FOR YOUR US GOLD CALENDAR

US GOLD
AMTIX

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Here we go . . . another selection of well informed, humorous, literate and impartial comments on the state of the nation, that is the Amstrad one! Some of the letters are reasonably intelligent too! As always, a reminder to address your letters to the correct department of the magazine. Technical letters should be sent to AMTECH while letters of a light hearted nature should be sent to On The Spot. Right let's cut out the banter and get down to the nitty gritty. The writer of the first letter wins a voucher for £20 of software.

MorE AmtiX! PleasE

Dear On the Spot
My letter contains a subtle amount of back-slapping, it also includes some responsible constructive criticism, but most of all I hope you enjoy reading it.

Firstly I must say that I have been reading your sister magazine CRASH since the November issue in 1984, you could say I was hooked! But ......
As my Spectrum decided to take an infinite leave of work. I (a meagre and modest computer freak) could not bear life without my daily dose of square eyes and keyboard cramp. So without due consideration (but with a lot of financial planning) I decided to acquire my own residential Amstrad.

With three types of Amstrad computers available I eventually eradicated the CPC664 and CPC6128, leaving me with (you guessed it!) the CPC464. Well anything is better than a redundant Spectrum, and the Amstrad surpassed even a working speccy (if you call blasting pixel pictures working!)

This brings me to announce the fact that all my CRASH magazines have been virtually rendered useless (violin fades in background). Frustration grew, now there is no help for my straddles? You can imagine (no not the software house) walking into my local newsagents to find a relatively new publication called AMTIX! Wowiee, yipee, hurray, three cheers (overdoing it a bit wot!)

All the usual features were there, well all the usual CRASH FEATURES. As you know the Terminal Man cartoon strip finished as soon as I started collecting CRASH, I only caught the last episode. But! what a relief, the full story in AMTIX! Those people who read CRASH and then condemn AMTIX! as a conversion copy obviously have no idea of the cost elements, even when it comes to copying maps and competitions. Keep up the good work!

Another point (no offence to OTS) is in reference to the photo phobic, overworked and underpaid (have you guessed yet?) well here is another clue 'LM', yes it's him, the one and only Lloyd (more money) Mangram. What has OTS got more than LM? Wasn't he good enough in CRASH? (No!) well I thought that the more personal, one-to-one approach of the FORUM surpassed everything else, so why spoil a good combination (Crashites and Lloyd) with a team of (whoever!) people. Come on AMTIX! pull your LM's up.

Again without offence, I refer to the tremendous tips teenager, Robin (where's your pokes) Candy. His spot in AMTIX as in CRASH, takes second place to OTS or FORUM, me personally believing in digesting program code and spewing up a formula for success. Good job help is at hand or I would still be trying to complete **3 Weeks in Paradise**. Thanks Robin, three cheers and give AMTIPS more space per issue.

Now I come to the conclusion of the afore mentioned grovel, I am sure that AMTIX! could be extended, even if it does cost an extra 50 pence. I would pay it, so much value for money already. (Better be prepared for the rush of letters from the miserly Amsters).

Now a moan (sorry!). It concerns the backnumbers. What apparent disorganisation. I sent for issues 1-4 of AMTIX! and I waited (believe it or not) for three whole weeks, talk about a harassed postwomen. What's up with them? For goodness sake change their batteries, they're slowing down a bit!

Subscriptions offer an outstanding and very tempting service, great in fact. I mean giving two games away and special offers for subscribers. Whatever next? I'll tell you. Why doesn't the Subscription Department give the potential subscriber his/her own choice of games, far more tempting, don't you think?

The following is a list of my top five sections or features that are presently in AMTIX!. They are in my order of preference. Also there is a column which I think gives a fair account of how many pages should be allocated to each selection. And the percentage that each received of my vote.

1: On the Spot - 8 - 48%, 2: Amtips - 6 - 23%, 3: Reviews - 32 - 18%, 4: Amtech - 10 - 8% 5: Adventure - 12 - 3%.

That should leave about 40 pages for PROFILES, PREVIEWS, ADVERTISING, and COMPETITIONS, need I say more? Well I'm going to.

Moving on now to your reviews in AMTIX! As you see it figures highly in my table. Why not! If it wasn't for your reviews I wouldn't even know what games there were let alone if they were any good. I would like to see a list of all places that sell Amstrad software (pretty please), no doubt of W. H. Smith though is there?

Are you yawning yet? Good for you!

One penultimate point . . . (no poetry wasn't a strong point) . . . you ran a competition in issue 3/4 to design a program to ingest and compute your AMTIX! top twenty chart. Is it won? Has anybody entered? Can I have a bash? (willing, of course, to send it to you without obligation of getting the prize).

Finally (Heh! The end. Thank God!) why don't you introduce the Hotline Chart for AMTIX! surely anyone owning an Amstrad computer wouldn't stoop to levels of self-indignation, leaving rude and obtrusive messages on the answer phone. I mean if you want us to vote why should we pay 17p for a stamp. On the other hand if you haven't got a phone think of the phone bill you're saving.

That's it, no more now . . . the saga continues. Maybe? OK then you'll hear again from me soon!
Paul Da-Silva, Atherstone, Warwickshire
PS (Oh no not more!) Yes (What is it then?) Thanks for AMTIX!

What a scribe you are Mr Da-Silva. If we answer every point you make AMTIX! will certainly be bigger this issue. I am currently negotiating for a mega-scribe to rival LM and take over the reins of this column. Julian Rignall has now succeeded Robin Candy and is already demanding, and to a certain extent receiving, more space for his material. The 'Aid for an idiot' competition has been judged and the result appears in this issue.
OTS

DESIGN A COMPETITION TO DESIGN A GAME

Dear AMTIX!
Before you start, I'd just like to compliment you as a whole (not as a fraction) for the professional layout your mag ensures. It's very rare that I put pen to paper and post my views to any old mag, but your binge looks like a print that caters for it's readers democratic opinions.

So what am I getting at . . . well, reading an article you printed last month I noticed a mortal wrote about having a brill idea for a game. Fair enough you moan with boredom (I mean who wouldn't be with what tripe I dish out), but what are you trying to get at, you ask?

Well (I gloat) this idea was quite good, so why don't you have a comp (you know, those things that appear in everyday women's and computer magazines) in association with a leading software company (but not Amsoft . . . I beg you, not the block graphic lovers' association (only joking .. I hope) to design a computer game for the Amstrad.

The winner could have it produced and you could fiendishly review it (which is good as the software you get to review nowadays depends on the quality or amount of it! . . . which is mostly a load of codswollop—I mean, some softy-ware companies don't care do they?).

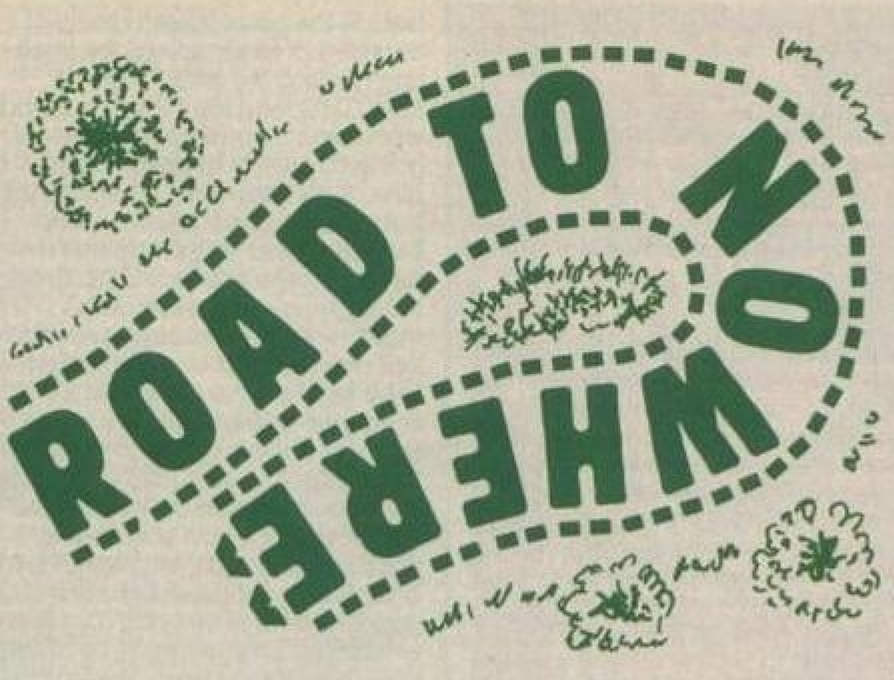
You know, I'm sure there's thousands of skulking amsters out there waiting for a chance like this, remember it's only ideas and no computing involved so everyone from toddlers to granny smiths could get involved.

So what do you think! Are you game. . . or are you a Sun reader?

Mike Thomas (Jnr), Wythall, Worcs

That is certainly a good idea for a comps minion. Who knows, the winning entry might get snapped up by some company and become nearly as rich as Crumbly overnight! We'll ask Super Ed to look into it.

OTS



ROAD TO NOWHERE

Dear OTS
I would like to comment on the article headed 'Amsoft, Where Are They Going?' in the February edition (page 37). I can tell you where they are going, it's nowhere fast!

After a delay of six weeks before receiving my PCW8256, then a further three weeks for the second disk drive to arrive (which eventually proved to be faulty) and a further week for the CF-2DD disks to arrive, I was by this time a little disenchanted with AMSTRAD, but I cheered up thinking of the promised news of software hints and tips etc. which they promised on receiving my guarantee card. Three weeks went by, nothing, so I wrote to them asking for the latest software news and airing my other grievances, lo and behold two weeks later, a reply, apologising for any inconvenience, but no software news that's not really true because they did tell me that the Simplex Accounts System that I enquired about (which was mentioned in the above article as being available from Amsoft) was not one that they were manufacturing, and suggested that I consult the magazine for advice as to where the Simplex program could be obtained. I happened to be in a local Dixons and they were kind enough to contact Simplex. Yes, the program was available, but the cost was £150.00 plus VAT. Where did you obtain the information from regarding price and availability, as the price quoted in your article was £49.95.

The point I am trying to make here is, that I purchased my PCW8256 for the sole purpose of business application, and I find that six weeks later I am still not able to apply it to my business because of the lack of information promised, and no second disk drive, which is at some far off distant place, to be replaced if and when available.

I would appreciate your comments regarding the Simplex program, and would be grateful if you could inform me from where I could obtain suitable software for business application for the PCW8256, because it's evident Amsoft are not interested in after sales follow up. It is a pity really, because the PCW8256 is an extremely good machine for the money.

WT Crumb, Merthyr Tydfil, Mid Glamorgan

Simplex? We are informed the gen was supplied by Amsoft. As to the availability of the program, why not give New Star Software a try on 0277 220573?

OTS

TIME FOR THE COMPARISON!

Dear Amtix!
First of all I would like to say how much I enjoy reading your magazine each month but I must confess I also read Amstrad Action. But wait, don't worry because this letter is about which magazine comes out tops. I have done a review of both magazines and here they are: Amtix! Cover: 94%; very well designed and some excellent art work. The Other One, Cover: 60%; fairly nice title design but the rest is poor. Amtix! Contents: 90%: very well set out and again some good art work included. The Other One, Contents: 84% Fairly average but nicely set out. Amtix! Free Gifts: 25% I didn't think much of the poster especially as a Chrissy present. The Other One, free Gifts: 90% Some good games and the PSS demos were really good. Amtix Software reviews: 92% Well done they are very accurate, good idea having blow up screen shots. The Other One, Software reviews: 90% Good but sometimes a bit strict with marks. Amtix Hints, Pokes and Maps: 80% Good hints and pokes and some nicely done maps. The Other One, Hints, Pokes, Maps: 82% Good hints lots of pokes and excellent maps. Amtix Overall: 93% An excellent magazine which I enjoy reading. The Other One, Overall: 85% Good magazine but best for its free gifts.

These are the main points for me in the magazines. I'm sure you'll print this letter because it says nice things about your magazine. Well done for producing the best Amstrad magazine.

Jason Bradley, Hartlepool, Cleveland

Flattery will get you everywhere, even into the pages of your favourite magazine. Only 93%? We'll have to try harder.

OTS

"GAC is so easy to grasp that within minutes of loading you feel the urge to sit and write something."
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SEQUEL SHOCKER

Dear OTS
After owning a 48K Spectrum since 1982 I decided, in October 1985, to take the plunge and buy a CPC6128. I was greatly pleased with my new acquisition and, as well as enjoying its great programming potential, I found it had a selection of good quality games.

Christmas came and I was given money by some relations to buy what I wanted. By January I was down at the local computer shop scanning the shelves for some games to buy with my money. It was then I made two mistakes: 1: I bought *Hypersports* by Imagine/Konami and 2: I bought *Zorro* by U S Gold/Datasoft.

By February I had completed both games and now I feel a bit let down after spending nearly £20 on them. I know you are probably saying 'You should have asked for a demonstration' but the shop was busy and the shop owner would not allow demonstrations. So, fool hardy as I am, I decided to buy on the reputation of the games producer.

I already owned *Yie Ar Kung Fu* and enjoyed playing *Hypersports* on the Spectrum so Imagine's record was favourable. Also I had played and liked *Bruce Lee* by Datasoft and U S Gold's reputation is excellent. So I also bought *Zorro*.

The point I am trying to put across is that software houses who have produced good titles should stop following them up with third-rate overpriced, 'one—week—and—you've—beaten—it' games! It's just not fair on the people who spend their hard saved pocket money on their products.

So Imagine, Datasoft, and any other software producer reading this, Please!, Please!, Please! keep to the best standard you have attained or many more people like me will become disappointed.

This is for your own good as well, because you are not helping yourself by damaging the confidence of your customers. As for me?, well, I have learned my lesson and from now on will wait to see the game in action before I buy, or at least wait for a review in your brilliant magazine.

David Clarke, North Hykeham, Lincolnshire

Lastability is one of the hardest qualities in a game to assess. Even if you try it out at the shop, you still don't know if it's going to take you a week or a month to solve it. Reputations come and go, but AMTIX will tell hit from hype.

OTS

CALDERDALE NEEDS A USER CLUB

Dear OTS
Before I go any further, I would just like to say that Amtix! is the computer magazine that I enjoy the most. I must say though that I am fed up of reading letters, criticising the other magazines available, particularly Amstrad Computer User. Every magazine has its own particular qualities and appeals to its own section of readers.

There is nothing, whatsoever, wrong with constructive criticism, but to be constructive it should surely be sent direct to the magazine, (or whatever or whoever else it may be aimed at), involved. Personally I am glad these other magazines exist whatever their faults, after all competition is very healthy.

Having got that out of my system, thank you for printing my letter in your April edition, unfortunately I didn't receive a single reply, and would therefore like to make another, final, appeal for anyone in the Calderdale area, interested in starting up an Amstrad User Club, to please contact me at the above address. Or if one already exists please advise me of its whereabouts. My final appeal is for advice from anyone currently involved in the running of a User Club, or the setting up and running of a new club.

My final comment is on Software, its availability and quality. I am currently, and have been for 2 -3 months, finding it very difficult to get hold of may of the new releases. This I appreciate, is partly because there are few good software shops in my area, though it does seem that new releases are extremely slow in reaching the shelves. The long delays in the release of a game after much advertising is also cause for concern, and is very annoying. I have also found that the quality of a lot of games that have received a lot of advertising, turns out to be very poor (in my opinion of course). *Rambo* from Ocean is a prime example. What a disappointment! Control of the character is hard and very frustrating and the graphics, by today's standards are appalling. What a waste of money!

I hope you print this letter. These are only my views and I would be interested in others' views on the subjects raised.

Andrew M Coote, Lee Mount, West Yorkshire

I hope you get some replies this time. The amount of promotion a game gets is no indication of quality. Just keep taking the reviews! By the way if you have trouble obtaining games why not order them through our mail order service?

OTS

PINK ELEPHANT PROBE

Dear OTS
Hi Guys! It's me again! (Who?) Damn brackets get everywhere don't they? That's enough questions, let's get down to business. I was a bit niffed that I didn't get letter of the month in issue five and even more niffed that after entering ALL NINE COMPETITIONS I didn't win a damn thing!!! But that's beside the point (It isn't really— courtesy of Mr Brackets). I was sitting reading my latest copy of MAXIT! (Spelt it right this time!) and wondered gloomily how I was going to pay for the giant sized, pink, fluffy elephant I had ordered from the local giant sized, pink, fluffy elephant shop. And then I turned a page and saw OTS. Great I thought, get the letter of the month and win the cash. I was only half way through writing the first letter of this letter (The man's drunk) when I realised you could only win software. Reaching for the whisky (the cat), I thought what the heck? You can do without the money (Liar!), you'll survive (Ha!), you never wanted it anyway (Phew! That was a whopper! I know a good liar when I see one . . .) But what can I write about? Life? The Universe? Everything? 'No', came a voice from the Gods, shaking the very floor, 'Shafqat vs Dave, the ultimate conflict!'

O K Chris Winstanley, keeper of the faith, caped crusader and all round wierdo must once again step into the breach . . . I have played *3D Grand Prix* and must disagree with Shafqat (I had a pink elephant called Fat (at once . . .). It's the best platform game on the market and Miner Willy is lovely to watch. But this is not all a one sided argument. A few pink elephants wouldn't have gone amiss don't you think Dave? Also I would like to point out that sending trees through the post is not a good idea — the stamp just won't stick.

Seriously though, (Seriously? Who is this guy?) *3D Grand Prix* is a good race game and deserves its rating in MAXIT! of course it could be better—take that as a challenge Dave. I don't suppose either of you have played *Grand Prix Driver*? Now there's a game . . .

Chris Winstanley, Freckleton, Lancs

Sorry, still not letter of the month. Perhaps a 300 page thesis on the evolution, habits and diet of pink elephants might just swing it (or a wad of used fivers).

OTS

WOGAN MEETS ARNOLD?

Dear Amtix!
I am not going to say what a wonderful magazine you are. I am not going to start saying that you are my best magazine and your nearest rival has still another 10 Amstrads to cross (that's the new slogan!)

I have some fabulous news for our every day Amstrad owners who are not boffins nor whizz kids but are FABULOUS Amstrad owners. Have you ever gone to your friends and got ridiculed at the fact that you can only use your monitor as a monitor and not as a TV well now you can tell them to go buy a Commodore (this is an insult). For only £22.00 you can buy this little gizmo with which you can turn your Amstrad's faithful monitor into a television.

Now for one more piece of news. Have you ever thought how AMTIX came to be number one? Well the secret is simple all they did was review computer games for the best computer 'AMSTRAD', I mean what else. One last thing to all you Amsters out there go and tell every Spectrum owner to be proud of the fact that they are owned by Amstrad. Keep up with the good work and give my best wishes to all the straddles in your offices (did I hear you say you didn't have any . . . ?)

Tagi (The computer Freak) Hashmi, London

You forgot to tell us what this marvellous doobrie is that can convert an Amstrad monitor into a television Tagi. How dare you insinuate we have no straddles in our offices. We have lots and lots, in fact sometimes it appears they are breeding!

OTS

WOT NO SCREENSHOT!

Dear OTS
What can I say, superb, cool, smart, if you follow my drift. I am referring to your mag. I have only had three issues of Amtix!, sorry I mean AMTIX! in capital letters. It must be the best of all computer mags.

The only tiny thing I could find wrong with AMTIX!, in capitals, is that on a few games advertised in your number one mag, is that a screen view is not shown, what I mean is that an example of graphics is not shown on a few lone individuals such as *The Edge*, or *Beach Head*.

I may be wrong, you may not be able to get graphic displays of some advertised games, I just thought I would point it out just in case it is possible to show them. I must admit my younger brother has been buying my Amtix! I mean AMTIX! lately. I say it's worth while cause.

Edward Price, Newport, Gwent

There are a number of excuses companies make for not putting screenshots on their ads. In descending order of crassness, these are a:the game isn't ready yet; b: the graphics aren't worth looking at; c: somebody likes drawing pretty pictures.

OTS

SHEKHANA REPLY TO MR FOWELL

Dear Sir
Shekhana Computer Services would like the opportunity to reply to Mr Fowell's letter which was published in last month's issue of your magazine. First, and foremost, Mr Fowell is an old customer of ours and we are somewhat surprised at his comments. He originally claimed to have purchased several programs from our stand held at an exhibition at the Novotel and then subsequently returned one program by post stating it was faulty. Although we had no proof of his purchase we did agree to exchange this for a program of his choice.

As you may be aware, Shekhana are one of the largest discount retailers of computer software in the business, offering the most competitive prices and a highly reputable service. It is normal policy of the mail order division of the company to despatch the large volume of orders received on a daily basis without allowing for the majority of cheques to be cleared. However, in Mr Fowell's case, due to a clerical oversight (we are, after all, only human), there was a slight delay in processing his order. On investigation our records show the program in question was despatched via first class mail in the first week of April. We are therefore completely mystified as to why Mr Fowell should still be awaiting his order, two months after it was despatched. The last correspondence received from Mr Fowell was dated April 2 and subsequently we have had no further contact from him and had assumed he had received his goods and was perfectly happy with the service he received.

We feel it is only right and proper we have the right of reply in your magazine so we can put forward our side of the story to your readers. Furthermore, perhaps the editorial department could in future, do their homework, and at least ascertain the full and correct facts before proceeding to print articles which could prove more embarassing to the publishers than the retailer for whom it was obviously intended.

Azam Khan, managing director, Shekhana Computer Services, London

Thank you for your letter Mr Khan. It is not unheard of for mail to get lost in transit. As stated in the last issue of AMTIX! the letter was published in the hope of obtaining a reply from your good selves and to this end the exercise was successful.

OTS

TIME TO USE YOUR INFLUENCE

Dear Amtix!
Using your influence and charm etc, etc, could you please get Database to put on an Amstrad show in Birmingham. I managed to get to the Manchester one but only with luck. Please! Please! put in more reviews and also have a mega-game award of which only one is awarded a month. As well as that put your initials at the bottom of reviews.

I'm not going to say much on the next point because of the strong language which would be needed to emphasize it enough so here goes tell that "*" Shatgat Nasal to go and "*" himself as he clearly has not enough brains to do anything else. Can Robin Candy tell us what has happened to the other half of the Zorro tips? *Tell me else* I'll set Liddon loose on you (should be a big enough threat). Could you tell me where a person gets a cheap disk drive for my 464?

This won't get letter of the month because it contains bad language, ie Shaftwat Nasal, but I'll creep up to you any way you're brill and keep up the good work.

Phil, Moseley, Birmingham

No doubt Database will pick up your point of view. They keep a watchful eye on most computer magazines. If they think it is viable no doubt they will organise a show for Birmingham. Mr Candy has gone on to new things but Mr Rignall promises to put on his mask and research *Zorro*. If you want a disk drive for your CPC464 shop around, the prices tend to vary from store to store.

OTS

SCOOBY DOO WHERE ARE YOU

Dear OTS
I won't waste your valuable time telling you how good AMTIX! is because I am sick and tired of reading those kind of letters. All I want to know is:—Where Is Scooby Doo? Is It True That *Back To The Future* Is On Disk -(Disc) Only? Is *Commando* available yet? Why Do I Hate Mondays? And Where Is *Electra Glide*? Got to go now, Brookside is on.

Justin Mason, Shanklin, Isle of Wight

***Scooby Doo* was held up for various reasons, like they couldn't shoe horn the thing into the computer memory. A whole new game is now being written by Gargoyle and should be ready 'real soon now'. On your other points: no, yes, who knows?**

OTS

A BOOK PLUGGER WRITES

Dear OTS
I know that you only print groveling letters saying how great your magazine is, so I will start with a bit of groveling, grovel, grovel, creep cringe, crawl. 'Yeuch, just my luck, crawling into something with unpleasant characteristics'. Oh well forget that. Now I can get on with the letter.

The main reason for me writing to such a mega-mag such as yours is to plead with you to mention a hint's book for adventures which I have compiled. It is called *The Adventurer's hints Compilation* and it includes full reviews and tips on all the most popular adventures. I will be selling it for £1.00 as it is of quite a substantial size.

Also I am at present programming a game which I created and think it is destined for success I am calling it the *Mr Men's Tea Party* (Ha, Ha), be seriously, I am calling it *Pilgrim's Quest*.

Could you please tell me whether *Critical Mass* has been released for the Arnold yet? as I have seen it advertised but cannot purchase it anywhere. I would just like to tell you that there are a few minor faults in your magazine. For a starter you don't give enough space to the OTS, Amtips! or Adventure Arcana sections. Also the fact that your cartoon, *Terminal Man* gets longer every month is giving less room to the other, more important features. You should have cartoons but don't give them so much room and make them something to do with computers.

Now that I have finished nagging, I would like to ask if there are any Arnold users out in this vast world who would be willing to put up with me as a pen-friend, me! a mere mortal, who's only recognition is as being a *Lord of Adventures* in dare I say it, I dare, another mag if anyone is interested could they please send a photo—and so on.

That's all I have to say except that there are still a lot of superb columns in your mag (creep, cringe, crawl) and keep up the good work.

Tim Gurney, 10 Garwyn Avenue, Roundwood, Meliden, Prestatyn, Clwyd LL19 8LR

We can take the criticism (sob). Our spies at Durell tell us that Critical Mass should be out around September, and very pretty it is too. Our hardware softie is still four pages long and, as you will have notices, we have printed your address in full in case anyone wants to write to you and even send a picture!

OTS

QUILL QUERY

Gentlemen of OTS
Many thanks for including my letter in your May issue. In it I expressed my inability to understand more than 30 per cent of the contents of the *Quill* instruction book.

Your reply inferred that I stood alone, a witless cretin from Dummheitensplatz in the midst of thousands of ordinary people who assimilated the instructions with the greatest of ease.

I don't know Roger Kean. I do know that our Roger is not entirely new to the world of computing and that is why I say that your method of establishing the truth of the situation was not impartial. You can only do this by approaching a group of people with little or no computing knowledge, presenting them with a *Quill*, piece and ask them to create an adventure. I have no doubts, whatsoever, about the outcome. I am not saying that a knowledge of computers and associated languages is necessary. I am saying that only people who specialise in adventure creating can possibly know what it is all about.

I have a bagful of 'A' and 'O' levels (none of which have done me any good so far) and I would swap them all for a good knowledge of how this confounded *Quill* operates. As far as I can remember 24 entries alone have to be made to make an electric torch switch on and off in an absolute jungle of rigmarole, regulations, quits, turns, ends, gets, drops, objnos, locnos ad infinitum.

I looked forward very much to the *Quill* as I rather fancied my chances in the imagination field but I was soon defeated and have, on several occasions, been tempted to turf it out. Approaches to Gilsoft have been met with a two line circular type letter. I'll pay handsomely for a good method of sorting it out. So many firms pour stuff out with a complete lack of understanding of what good instruction means.

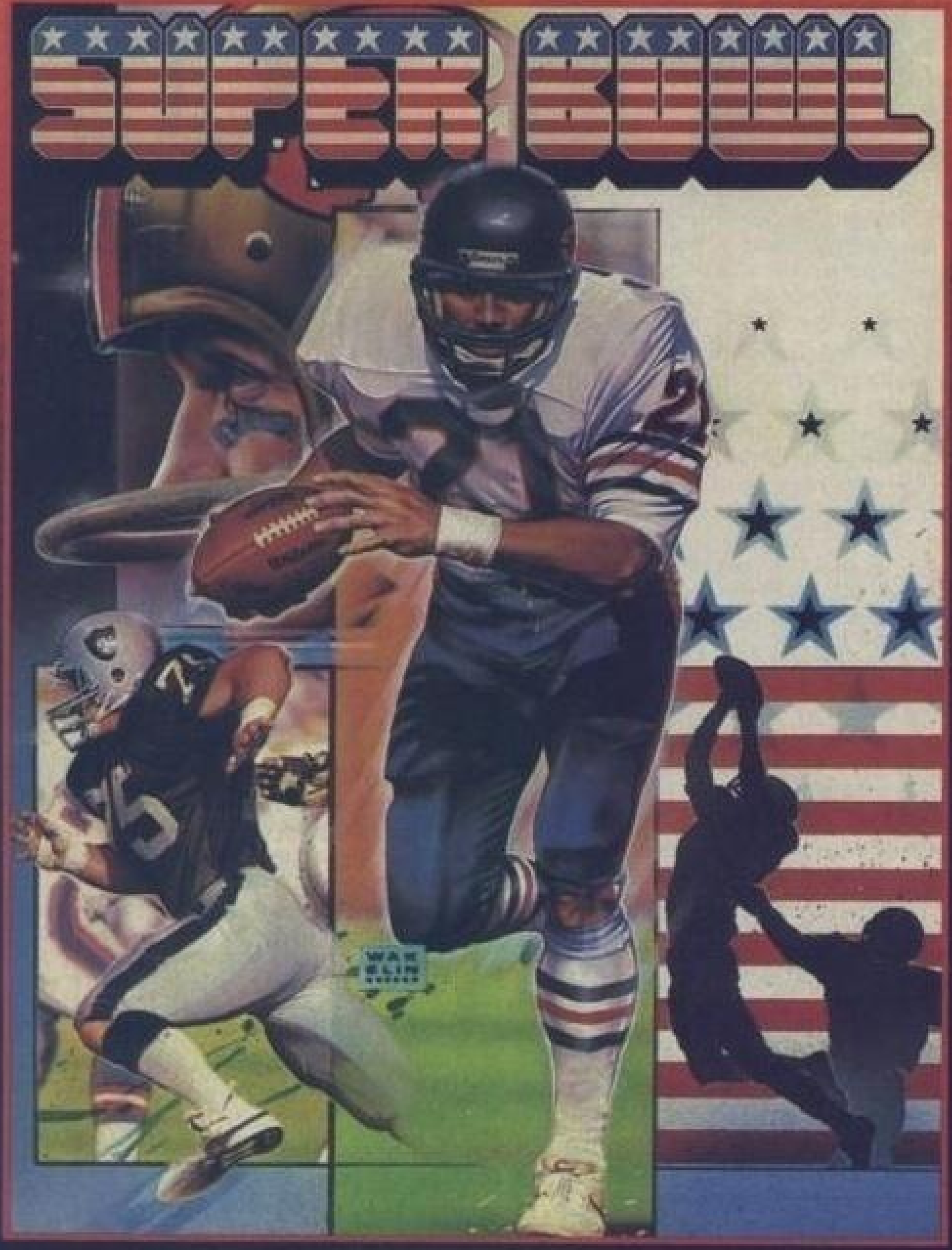
Robert Lamb, Cottingham, East Yorkshire

The tip is to take your time. Work through the manual very slowly, do not skip anything. Try the example given in the manual as this shows most of the techniques you will need. Just that and a great deal of time is probably the solution. If anyone out there has an easier method they can write in.

OTS

Well, that's it for another hot and sticky month. Don't forget to address your OTS letters properly, that is: ***OTS, AMTIX! MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB, otherwise all the people in post sorting get anxious, then angry and finally, impossible to deal with. Keep the ideas, complaints and (blush) praise coming . . .***

HERO


SUPER BOWL
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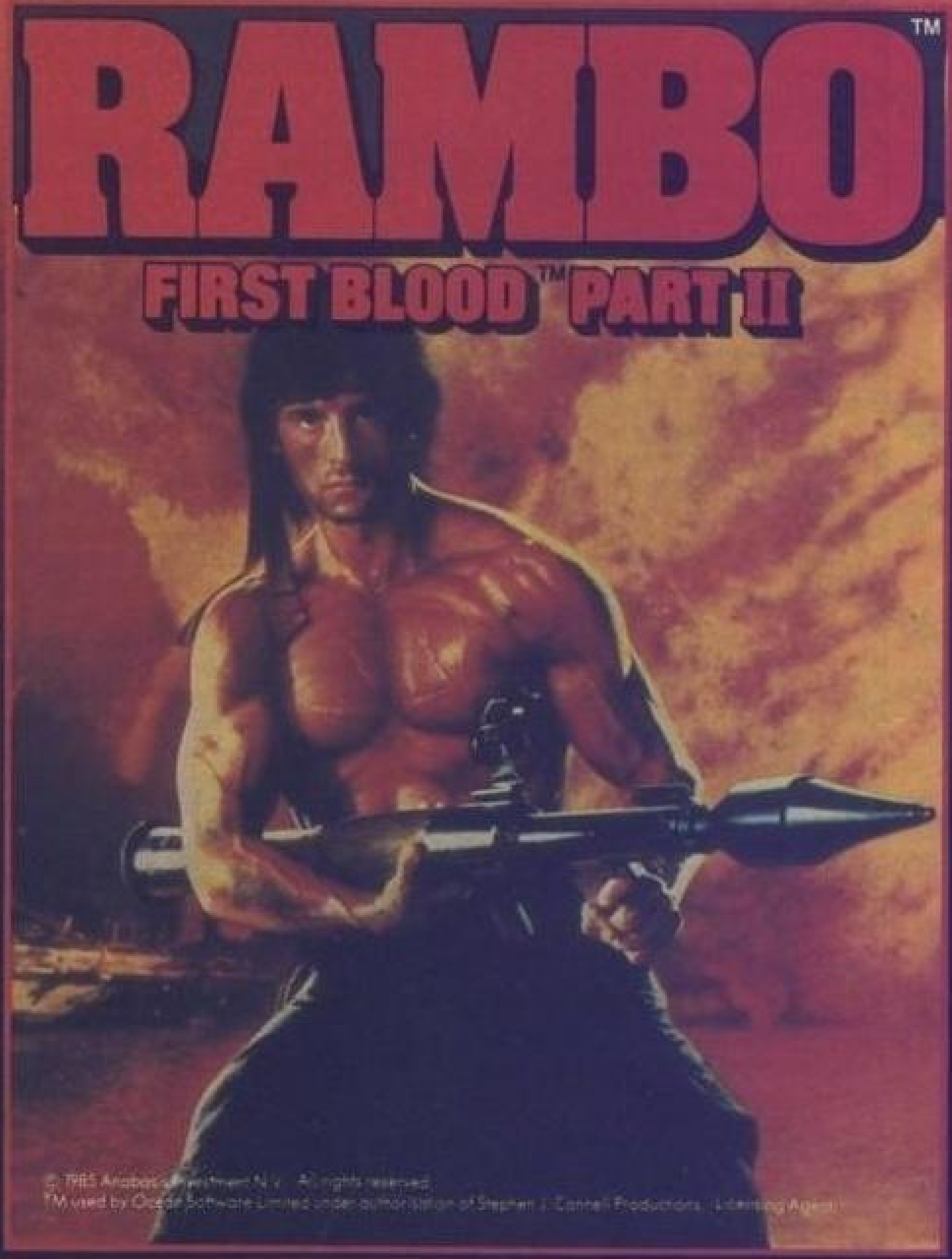
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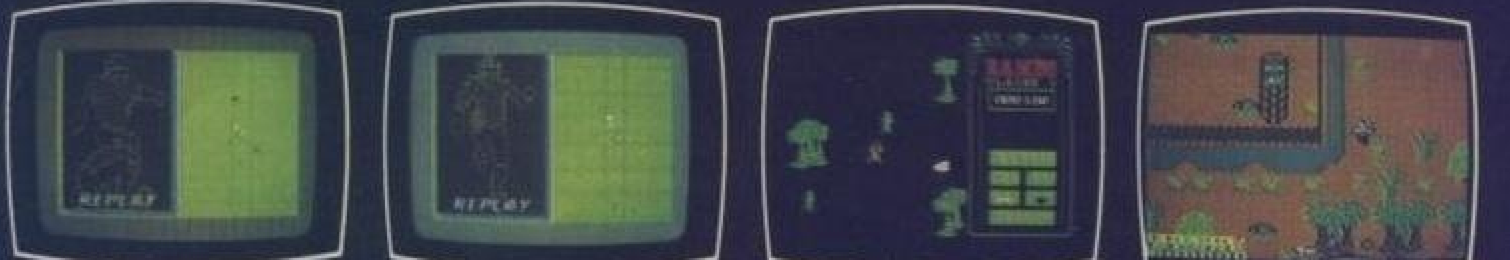
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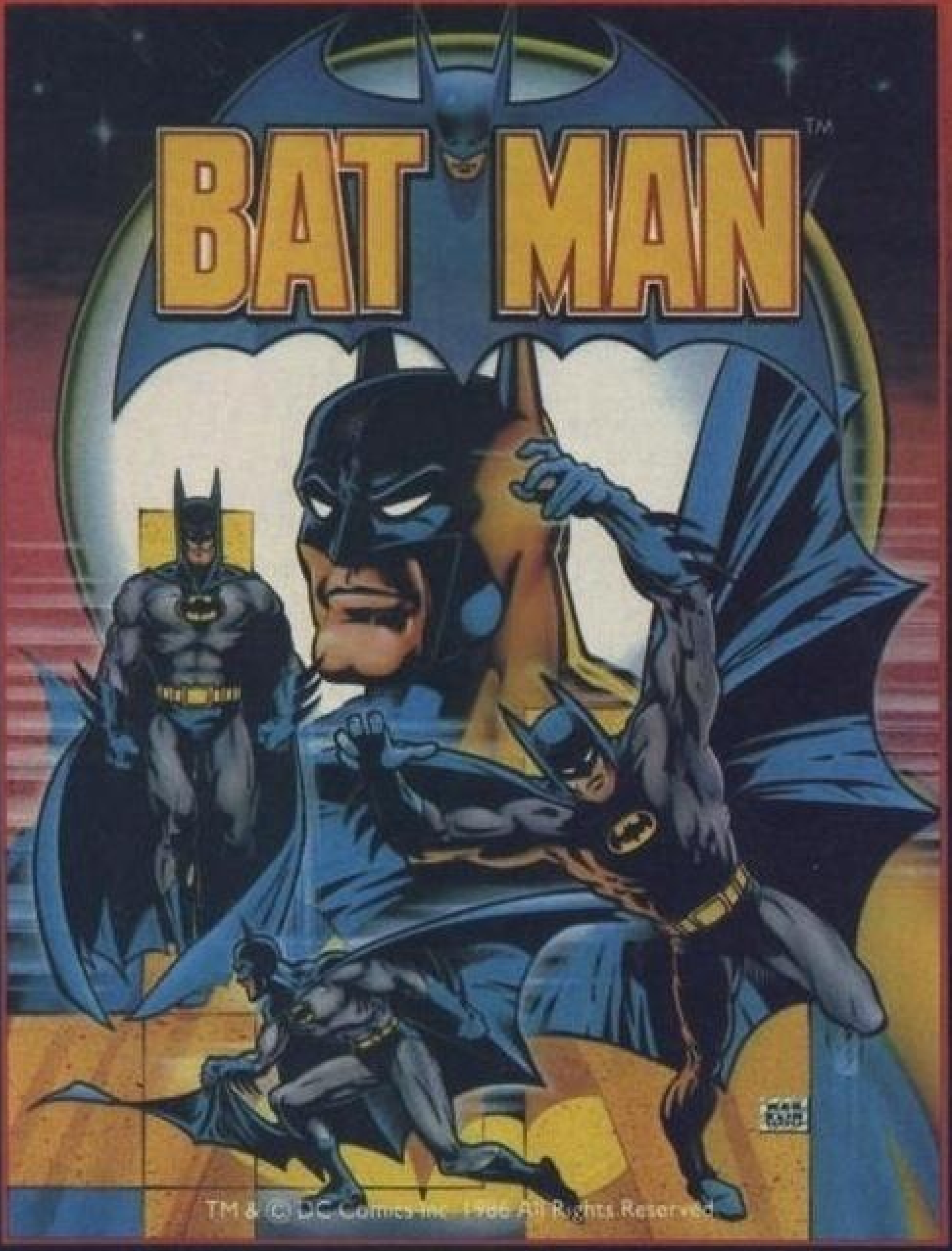

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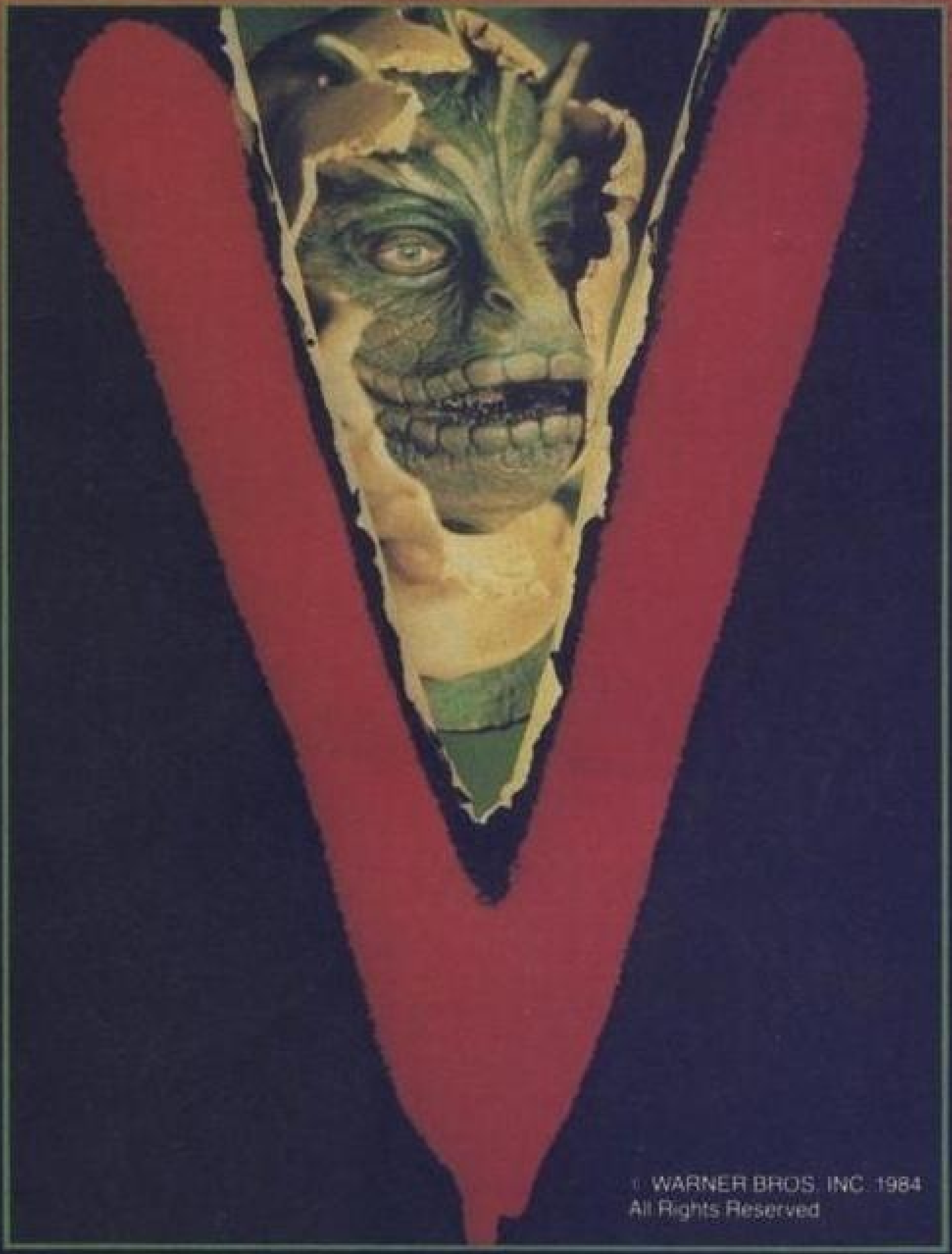

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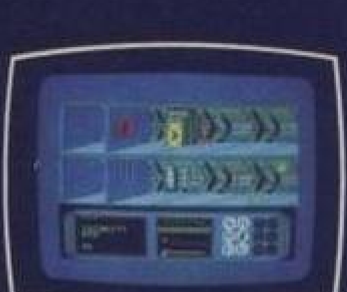

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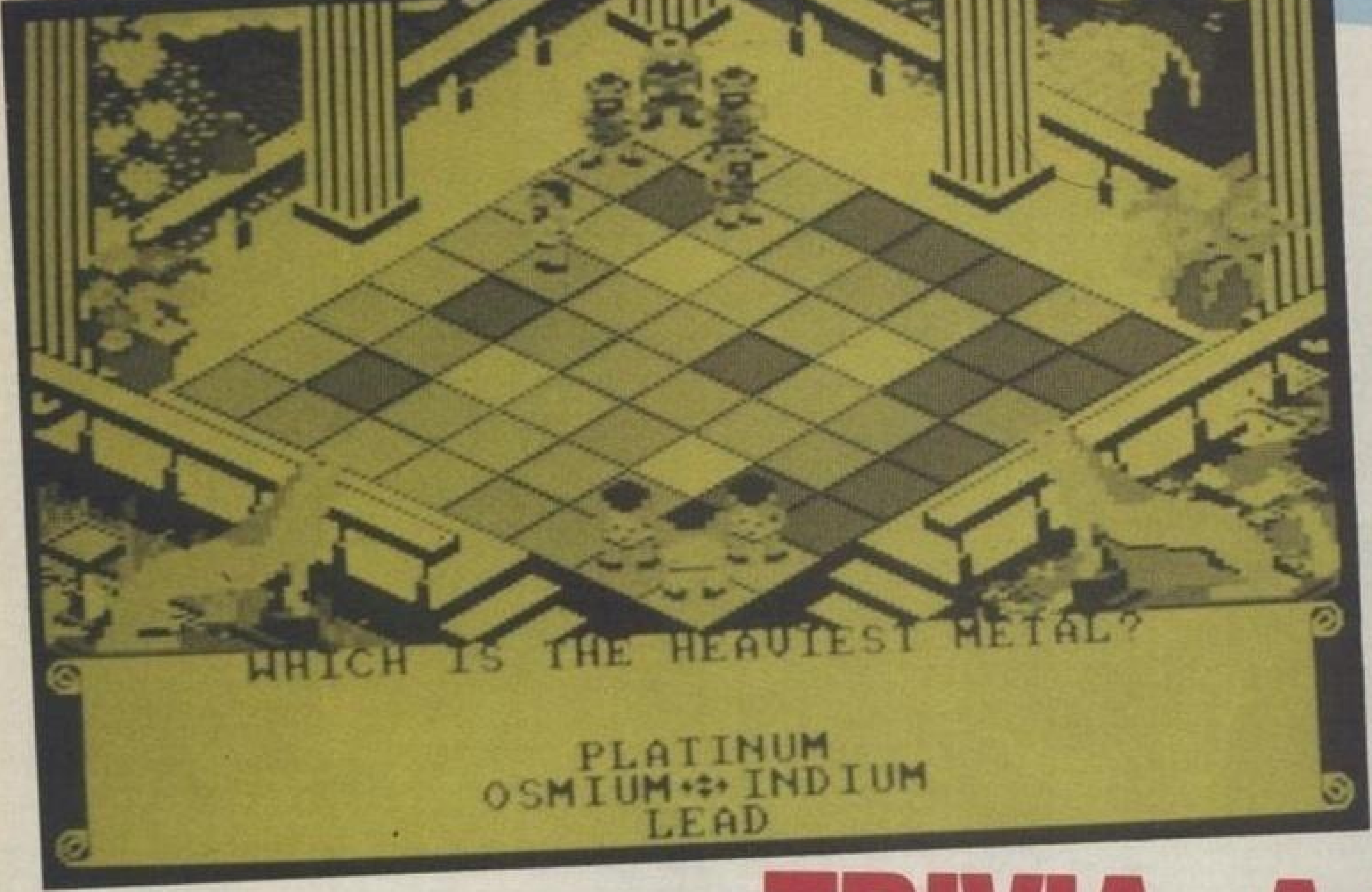


WHICH IS THE HEAVIEST METAL?

PLATINUM
OSMIUM ✣ INDIUM
LEAD

The 3D perspective view in this unusual variant on the 'Trivia' theme.

POWER PLAY has a twist. If two players move onto squares adjacent to one another it's possible for them to 'challenge' each other. The question is printed up in the usual manner but both players have race to choose the right answer and the first person choosing crrectly wins. If both players get it wrong then the first to answer incorrectly loses. The winning player is awarded more wisdom points, but the losing player gets a load knocked off. If this battle continues and one player's wisdom is reduced to zero his character dies and is eliminated from the game. To win the game you must eliminate all other players' characters from the game in this fashion.

TRIVIA - A GAME FOR THE GODS

Get ready for a new type of game which will be coming your way during the Autumn. **Power Play**, subtitled **The Game of the Gods**, is a sort of trivia/arcadey style reflex game which tests the old grey matter as well as your manual dexterity as you battle against up to three other players to eliminate one another from the game.

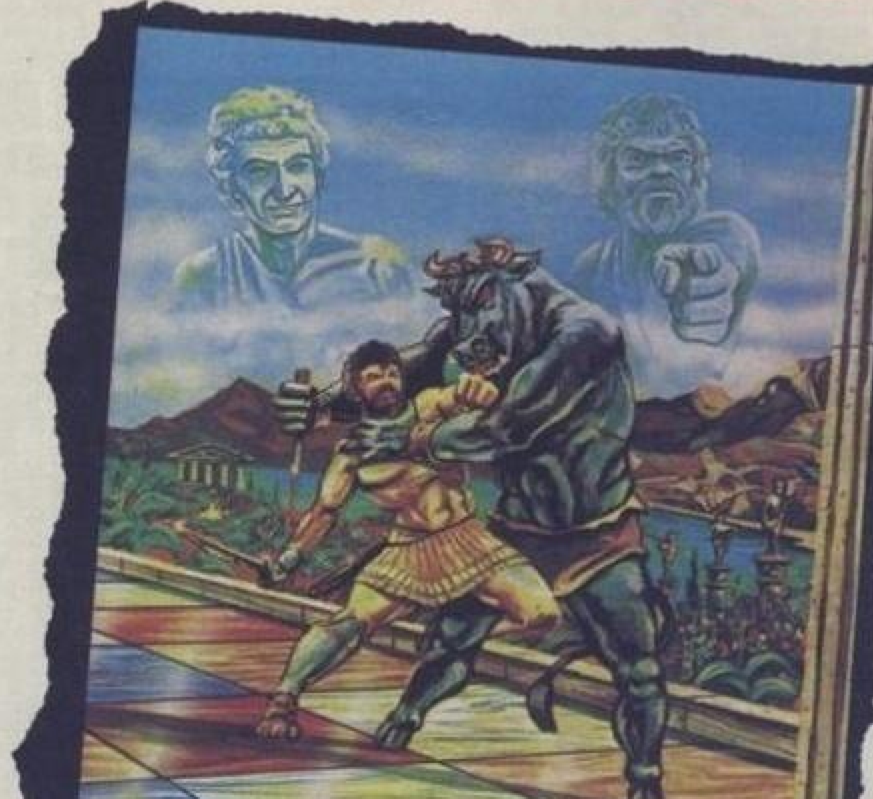
The game is played on a coloured chessboard with each of the players' four pieces taking up positions at each corner of the board (the layout of the pieces depending on how many are playing). The first player is asked to select one of his four pieces and once he has done so he's asked a question on a certain subject, depending on the colour of the square he's standing on. There are four different colours and each colour is relevant to a specific subject — **general knowledge**, **sports and leisure**, **science and technology** and **history and geography**.

The question appears near the bottom of the screen and underneath are printed four possible answers, each on the four points of the compass. Moving the joystick in one of the four directions selects the answer relevant to that direction. You've only got a certain amount of time to choose the right answer (2.5 to 10 seconds, depending on the level), fail to make your mind up within the imposed limit or get the question wrong and your go terminates. Get it right and you are able to move your chosen player one square forwards (or which ever direction you wish). Once the first player has moved, or failed to move then it's the next player's turn.

As you answer more and more questions correctly your 'wisdom' rating increases. Answer enough questions and you're able to mutate into a more powerful creature. Starting out a mortal Hercules, it is possible to eventually grow into one of the most powerful creatures around, a Satyr *(eeek)!*.

The program comes with 2,000 questions, 500 loaded in at a time, but just in case that isn't enough there's a question compiler on the other side of the tape which allows you to compile your own files for use against friend or foe. Great eh? Imagine it — 'What colour undies did I have on last Tuesday — Red, green, black or blue?' They wouldn't stand a chance!! Look out for this program, we should be reviewing it in a couple of issue's time.

Julian Rignall


POWERPLAY
THE GAME OF THE GODS

Arcade bits and pieces together with brain stretching make up

NCING BACK WITH OLD IDEAS

As reported briefly in last month's issue, the latest offering from **CRL** is **Room 10**, written by **Pete Cooke**, the author of *Tau Ceti*. CRL intend a series of games to be created around the *Tau Ceti* mythos and this is the first in the line. To explain the title, Room 10 is traditionally the room in a Galcorps leisure complex reserved for the popular low gravity sport of Glyding. This is the game of the sport.

On loading the game up, there are options for display colours, one or two players, redefinable keys, instructions, difficulty and speed settings. On the final version there will also be a choice of languages for the instructions. Once you have decided to play, the screen changes to a split screen view. Player one's view is at the top with player two beneath (incidentally, when playing against the computer, you still have the choice of using either player one or two).

To the right of the playing views is the score board that displays both players' scores in large digital figures. Player one serves first. In case you're wondering about the term 'serves', it becomes immediately clear that this game is a three dimensional ping-pong. The room is in some ways similar to a squash court, closed on all sides. The ball cannot go 'out'. Each players' views is taken from the middle of the player's goal area — the wall behind the bat. For this reason the bats are transparent. The ball floats when stationary, just in front of the service player's bat.

Once service has taken place, the game is simply a question of always making sure your bat gets behind the ball in order to allow a return whilst hopefully making the return difficult enough through spin or bouncing of walls to get passed the other player and score a goal. Each goal is worth five points. The first player to get to thirty-five is the winner.

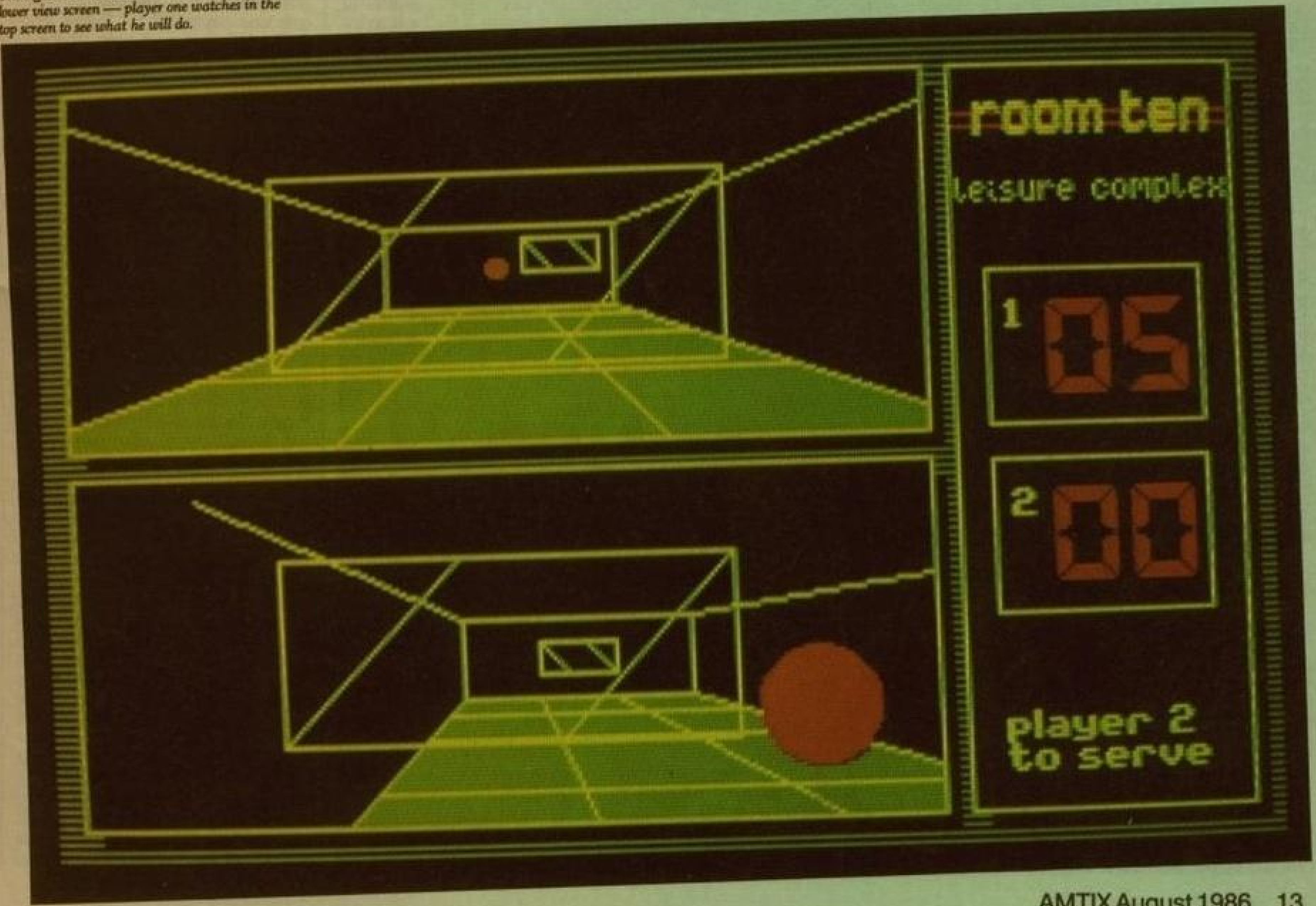
Sound effects are used to signify hitting a wall or scoring a goal while the graphics have details like the shadow below the ball or even for perspective tricks. Because the player's view remains unchanged and considering the forced perspective used in the game, it may appear that the ball is going to hit the edge of the bat and yet a goal is lost to your opponent. A little skill needs to be acquired therefore to ensure a good game.

Apparently, all that needs to be finished (apart from the addition of foreign language instructions) is some alterations to the size of the bat and the routine that checks for the collision of the bat with the ball. So hopefully we will soon be able to bring you a full review.

Julian Rignall

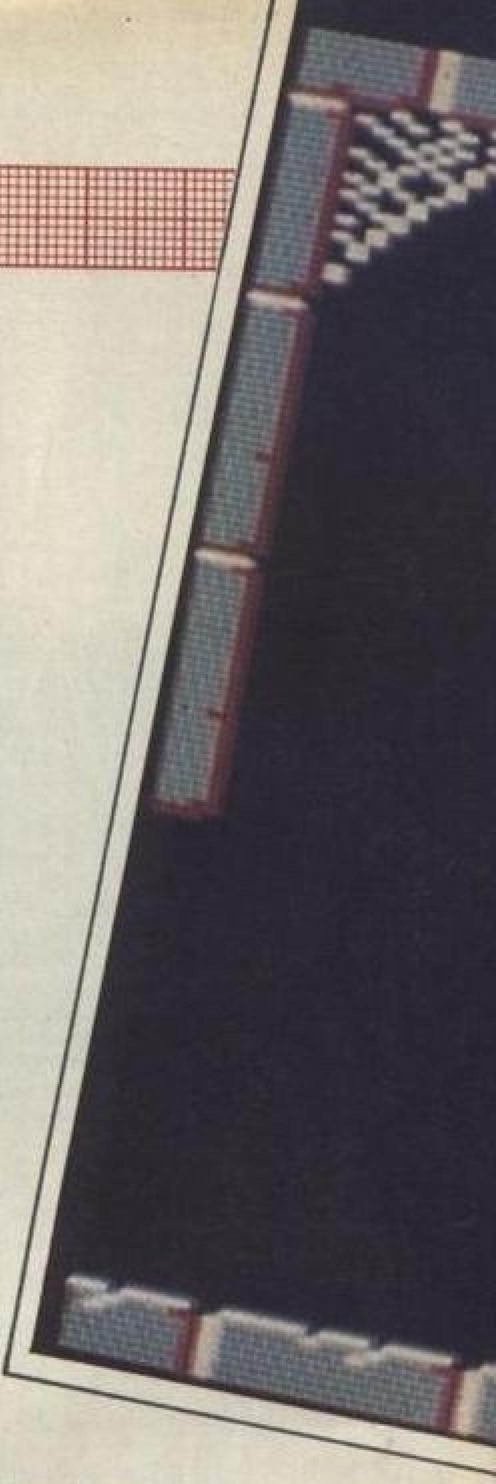
The TAU CETI legend continues in this next game from CRL

The big red ball ricochets towards the player two's lower view screen — player one watches in the top screen to see what he will do.



CAULDRON II

Palace, £8.99 cass, £12.99 disk



If you cast your mind back to the mists of time you may remember a great little game called *Cauldron*. In it you played a nice old hag who battled against an evil, bloated Pumpking who ruled the woods with his Golden Broomstick. His power was complete but he underestimated the scheming hag. One dark night after the Pumpking and his minions had had a particularly raucous orgy, Witchy gathered six secret ingredients and cast a spell to distract the Pumpking while he was still fuzzy from his alcoholic cavortings. In the confusion she stole his Golden Broomstick and with her new found power, banished the porky vegetable, and all his minions, forever.

Well, nearly. She failed to spot one particularly minute Pumpkin who rolled underneath the Pumpking's throne. Imagine the little chappie's surprise when he awoke and found that he was the only survivor. Now, you'd think that he'd be all upset about losing his evil and thug-like friends, but no, this wasn't the case. The reason why the bouncing veggie had joined the ranks of the swollen hordes was because the king had raided his Pumpkin village and told all the young male Pumpkins that unless they joined his army he'd turn their family into haloween heads. Now, what could he do but sign the conscription form?

So, freed of the Pumking's threats he bounded back to his village and led a happy life, being good, helping everybody and generally being a wonderful Pumpkin being. All went well for a while until one fine summer's day. Pummy was bouncing down the road looking for something to do when a breathless Raven swooped down and landed before him. 'Help us please' squawked the shiny black bird. 'The power of the broom has perverted the goodliness of the witch and she has become evil beyond all measure. She's far worse than the Pumpking ever was and I fear that she will destroy everything. You are our only hope since you know the power of the broom'. And with that the Raven keeled over with heart failure.

The Pumpkin sat and thought for a while, then suddenly jumped up with a stirring cheer and bounced at speed towards the witch's forest retreat. When he reached the edge of the forest he gasped in awe — the Witch's old cottage residence had grown into a huge and craggy castle and there was the most evil entourage of creatures that you ever did see strolling about the battlements. It certainly looked like the Witch's domination was now supreme. Pummy bounced over to a tree, sat under it and slowly and thoughtfully worked out a plan of action.

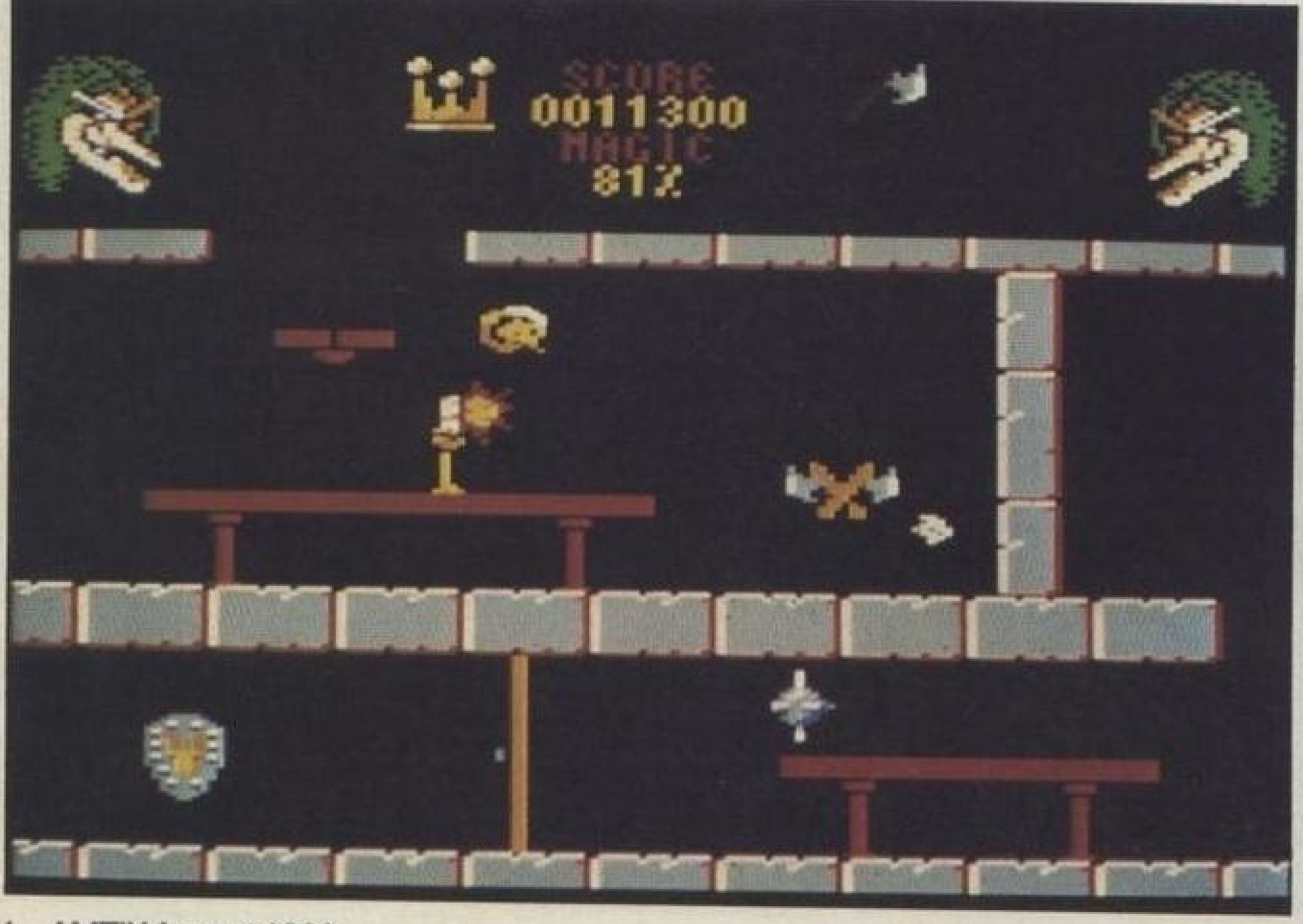
The Hag's castle is very large consisting of 128 rooms, each packed with the most horrible and atrocious of residents. This motley crew of monsters are all spoiling for trouble and as soon as they see Pummy they try their utmost to do him damage.

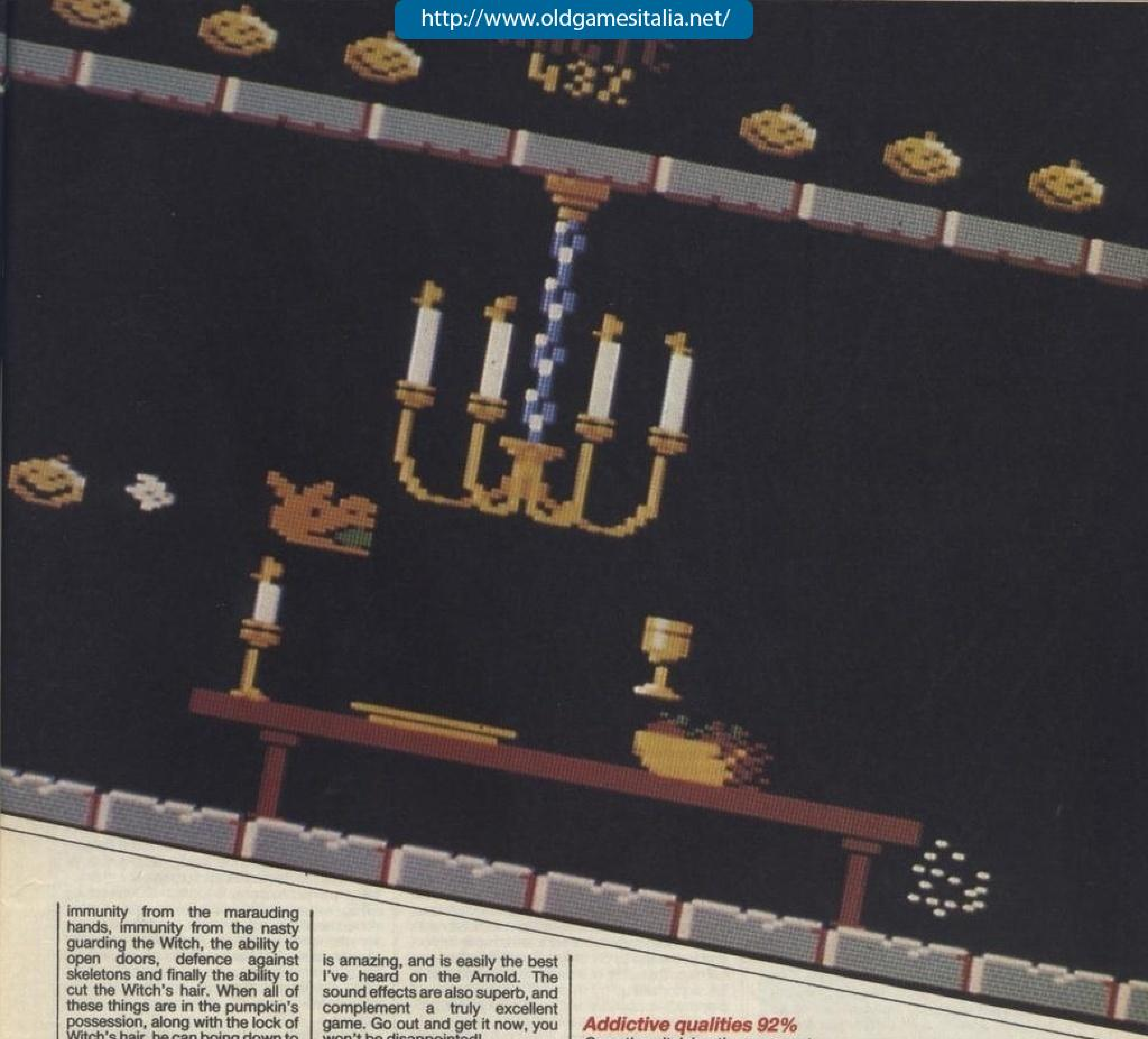
The game is viewed and played flick screen style as the pumpkin moves from one location to another. One of the most novel features of the program is the Pumpkin's method of locomotion — bounce mode! The athletic tuber sproings around the place like his Mexican Bean cousins and can perform three different heights of bounce: titchy boings, medium sproings and olympic sized spadoings. Normally he boings along but keeping the old finger on the fire button makes him boing and keeping it down on his second jump works him up to a ginormous spadoing, essential for jumping some of the wider crags in the castle.

The castle's interior is a pretty horrible affair and the bits of furniture and other objects look like they've been half-inched from the local tip make a Pumpkin's life a difficult one. There are also plenty of nasties to avoid or shoot, such as goose-stepping skeletons, and demented club wielding hunchbacks, airborne spikey spheroids, mallets, mice, sharp blades, spiders and grabbing hands. All these do their best to try to touch our ever-lovin' hero and if any of them actually achieves its aim Pum loses some of his energy (shown as 'magic' at the top of the screen). The worst of the maulers are the spiders and skeletons who kill outright if they get their own, wicked way. The reactions of being grabbed by a hand are even stranger — the joystick controls become reversed for a few seconds. Whenever a loss of life is incurred the Witch cackles mercilessly. Oh, some of Haggy's household effects have a rather terminal effect on the Pumpkin — ends of spears, axes and lit candles all kill if bounced onto and when that happens the witch gets more hysterics at your expense.

The witch is rather a careless old crone because she has left energy spots scattered about the castle which, if jumped into, restore the pumpkin's energy to the full. The first one collected gives Pum the ability to fire bursts of energy at the marauding baddies, but at the expense of depleting his magic by one unit. Sitting on the gables on the battlements are gargoyles (not the ones from Dudley who write games) holding stone platters that the springy little fella can bounce onto. He has to be careful when he bounces onto a tray to collect an object, though — if he doesn't bounce back quickly enough, the gargoyle tips him off and he plummets to the forest below. Luckily pumpkins are turgid enough to bounce and a loss of life doesn't occur.

The game commences at any one of four locations, but no matter where the pumpkin starts he can only complete his task by collecting seven different objects. Dotted around the castle are six items: a book of spells, a goblet, a crown, an axe, a shield and a pair of scissors. These give respectively the ability to complete the game,





immunity from the marauding hands, immunity from the nasty guarding the Witch, the ability to open doors, defence against skeletons and finally the ability to cut the Witch's hair. When all of these things are in the pumpkin's possession, along with the lock of Witch's hair, he can boing down to the bowels of the castle and dump everything in the cauldron found there. Doing so breaks the evil spell of power and everyone can live happily ever after, just like a fairy tale should end.

CRITICISM

1 **Great graphics and sonics, lots of playability, a little bit of shooting, addiction and challenge . . . what more could one ask for? Pum's control method is very novel and requires some getting used to, but with a little perserverence you're soon sproinging around the place like a good 'un. If you're after an unusual and addictive challenge then go out and buy this little gem. Oh, does anyone second my nomination for Pummy to become the AMTIX margin star?**

2 This is a very tough game which offers plenty of challenge. It's frustrating to play, but is addictive rather than unplayable. The title screen music is amazing, and is easily the best I've heard on the Arnold. The sound effects are also superb, and complement a truly excellent game. Go out and get it now, you won't be disappointed!

3 *Palace has been clever in avoiding a close follow up to* **Cauldron** *at least in game style, so there is plenty of fresh material in this one. Nothing completely startling, however, just a highly polished, thoroughly enjoyable and delightfully frustrating game in which the total adds up to being much more than the sum of the parts. Addictivity is guaranteed by the desire to explore the whole castle to see what's in store for your pumpkin.*

Presentation 92%
Fantastic attract mode and title screen.

Graphics 94%
Excellent sprites and backdrops.

Sound 94%
Title screen tune is really atmospheric and the sound effects enhance the game no end.

Playability 93%
Bounce, bounce, bounce — instant fun.

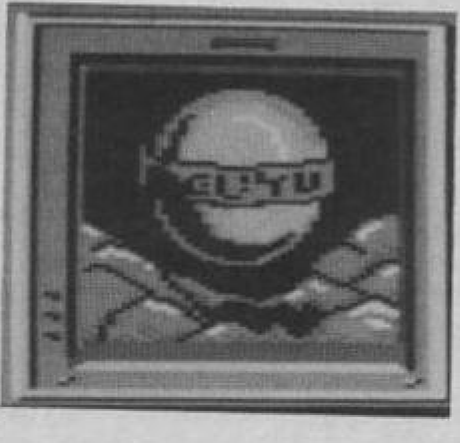
Addictive qualities 92%
Once the witch beating conquest begins you won't want to stop until you've won.

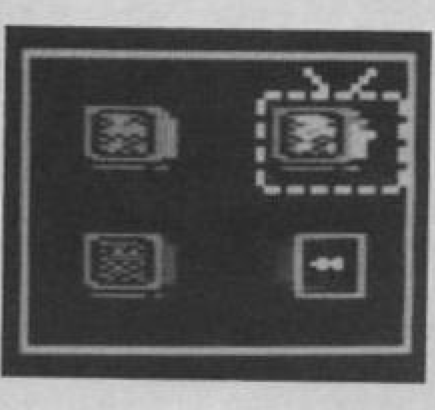
Value for money 92%
A quality game which is well worth shelling out for.

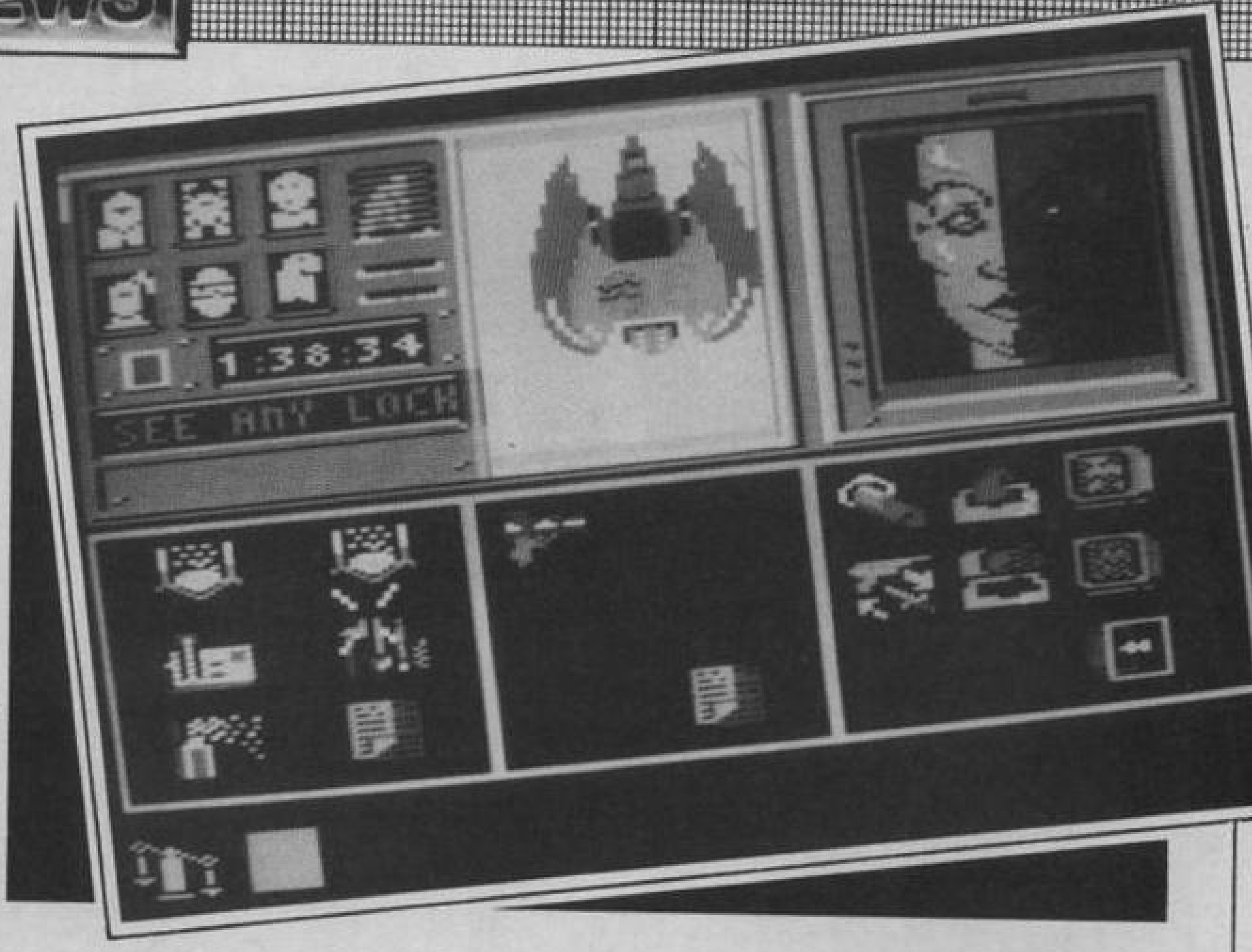
Overall 94%
A great follow up — fans of the original won't be disappointed.

AN AMTIX! ACCOLADE

SHADOWFIRE







Beyond, £9.95 cassette

CRITICISM

1 SHADOWFIRE looks and sounds good but it is a very difficult game to actually get into. The instructions are vague and this makes the program difficult to play. The graphics are quite good and a wide variety of colours are used. The sound is limited to a little tune that can be turned up or down using the arrow icons on the team screen and an alarm that sounds as if someone is being shot at. The game is strangely addictive and at the price is good value for money.

2 This is quite an unusual game and it is really difficult to know what to make of it. *Shadowfire* has quite good graphics and a reasonable amount of colour. The sound is reasonable too for what is really an adventure game. But these factors do not make a great game and in my opinion it seems to lack the staying power necessary to make a game truly addictive. Another drawback (if you've seen the 18 montft-old Spectrum version) is the poor Amstrad instructions.

3 I'm afraid I did not enjoy playing this game at all. It just seemed to be so dull, slow and uneventful. The instructions are almost incomprehensible and appear to have no relationship to the screen with which you are presented. After about five minutes of experimentation I eventually found how to progress to the next screen. This was no clearer than the first and inevitably I tired of the exercise. A lot of time will be required learning how to move between screens and command the characters. It has the same appeal as a text adventure and I would recommend that people who enjoy adventure strategies take a look at it. If you're an arcade player who wants action on screen give it a miss.

In the future you can be sure of two things; technology will get better and the baddies will be even more evil. All of this is strikingly apparent in *Shadowfire* which is a pure icon-driven adventure where you are in control of a task force, of very differing backgrounds and abilities, who are set a special mission . . .

Technology has leapt forward as has spacecraft design with starships being able to jump between star systems using their hyperdrives. Unfortunately technology hasn't come far enough to let the galactic throttle jockeys jump straight into parking spaces around planets orbits. This has two consequences; one being that it's still as difficult as it ever was to find somewhere to park and, more importantly, the dastardly traitor General Zoff can sit on the other side of a perilous asteroid belt in his skyfortress, Zoff V, and plot the invasion of planets supposedly under the Empire's protection without being disturbed.

Zoff's plans, however, are about to be upset by the arrival of a set of plans for a starship that can make the planet to planet jump that would make his impenetrable fortress more open for house calls once the Empire got them, but there again, if he had the plans he could conquer other planets with remarkable ease. Luckily, Ambassador Kryxix has the plans hidden close to his heart, on micro disk embedded safely in his spine but unfortunately the Ambassador is embedded safely within Zoff's fortress. It isn't going to take old Zoff very long to discover where they are and use the plans for his own ends.

The future of the Galaxy, once again lies in your hands as you co-ordinate the actions of the Enigma Force, a band of the Galaxy's finest criminals, cybernetics and non-humans drafted from the Empire's legions.

You only have one hour and forty minutes in which to accomplish the mission undertaken, and the 100 minutes slowly tick away on the clock to the left of the screen during which three objectives must be accomplished; the rescue of the Ambassador; to put Zoff under lock and key and finally to capture or blow up Zoff's spaceship fortress. The mission calls for clever use of each of the six Enigma Force members, each having properties that must be utilised to their greatest advantage. The characters are: **Sevrina Maris**, a criminal lady locksmith but loyal only to herself; **Torik**, a fast bird-like being, a useful scout with a knowledge of explosives and weapons; **Zark**, the team leader, a strong fighter and useful translator; **Syylk**, an insectoid and Zark's right hand thingy. Very strong and wears battle armour; **Maul**, a weapons droid, slow moving but well protected, and, finally, **Manto**, a transport droid and the only member of the team that can operate the transporter.

The game begins with the six characters on a 'team' screen from where changes of control between the various members of the Enigma Force are possible by using the joystick or keyboard to move the cursor over the character you wish to command, and then pressing FIRE. Various further interlinked icon screens allow monitoring of strength, speed and fitness for the selected team member along with weight carried. Other functions are carried out from a movement screen, an object screen with pick-up, drop and use icons for the objects/weapons on offer, and an attack screen.

Using these controls you must get your team through the starship and succeed in your mission. It won't be easy, so take care and — May the Enigma Force be with you!

Presentation 68%
Suffers from complicated instructions that make control hard at first.

Graphics 78%
There's no animation but bright and clean graphics are easy on the eye.

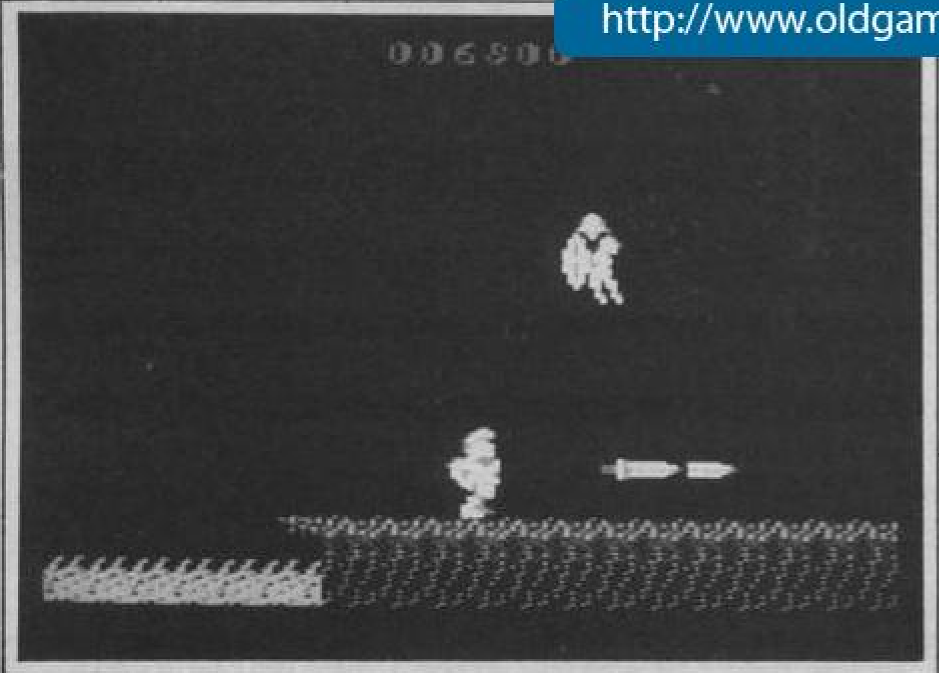
Sound 65%
Background tune helps, but otherwise sound is utilitarian.

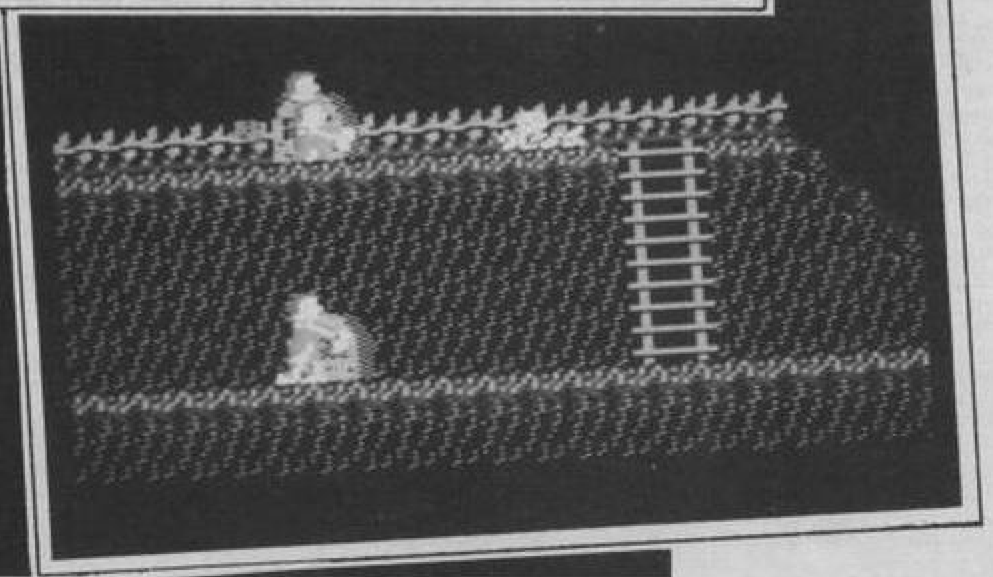
Playability 60%
icons are comprehensive and fun, but speed drags.

Addictive qualities 60%
Despite apparent complexity, the game is actually quite thin.

Value for money 64%
Worthy of any adventurer's cassette rack but lacking in general appeal.

Overall 66%
An adventure game that in its day pioneered the use of icons, but now looks a little dated against its successors.





GHOSTS AND GOBLINS

GHOSTS'N GOBLINS
elite

Elite, £8.95 cassette, £14.95 disk

Imagine a medieval scene: a brave knight just about to propose to his dusky-eyed maiden when out of a dark sky swoops a huge salivating demon and whisks her off without so much as a by-your-leave.

Thus the scene is set for the latest Capcom arcade conversion. The knight in question is slightly peeved that the love of his life has been swiped by such an ugly monster so he sets out to rescue her. Quickly buckling up his suit of armour he heads towards the demon king's lair with a determined expression spread over his handsome features. The path to the demon's abode is a treacherous one and is patrolled by his evil minions who all want to end the knight's mission of mercy prematurely. Contact with any monster results in the knight losing one of his five lives, and each time a life is lost he is returned to the start of the current segment of the game.

In the first zone, the gallant knight battles through a graveyard filled with zombies crawling out of the tombs, arms out-stretched to meet him. Unfortunately they're not going to give our hero a sloppy kiss on the cheek, killing him is more what they have in mind. Apart from the zombies patrolling around the graveyard a number of other nasty creatures hinder his progress. Evil eagles perch atop the gravestones and swoop in for the kill whenever the knight draws near and carnivorous plants shoot copious amounts of acidic digestive juice at the chivalrous crusader.

The knight is not totally defenceless and comes armed with an unlimited supply of lances which he can bung at the maniacal marauders.

Once the knight has managed to get through the perils in the graveyard it's over a river on a raft to meet Mr Podgy Guardian. This mini demon has to be blasted a couple of times to kill him and you can't pass before you can remove it from this Earth. Once that has been negotiated it's through a dark wood, avoiding more swooping knight ghosts and flying hooded creatures to reach a fat, stomping ogre. When the knight manages to blast him into little puffs of oxygen and ozone he gains the key to the Ice Palace. This section of the game is played on a backdrop which scrolls in four directions, and the knight must leap from platform to platform killing evil goblins that look rather like winged teddy bears. They are far from cuddly, swooping down from great heights with murder on their minds. Just to make life more difficult fireball-spitting veggies also inhabit the Ice Palace and gob their heart out if left undisturbed. Mistiming a leap can be fatal — the Ice Palace is built above water, and knights can't swim in their armour . . .

After the Ice Palace comes a ghost town, populated with all manner of weird and wonderful monsters that swoop out of shuttered windows and chase the questing knight. After the town the hero has to negotiate a platforms and ladders section — the Monsters' Den populated by by large and hardy demons that only die after a handful of hits.

A double dose of guardian demon has to be overcome at the end of the Den before access is gained to the final section of the game — the Cavern System. The mission is nearly over. Mr Knight's beloved is within sight. Unfortunately, she is being guarded by a rather large Chinese dragon who doesn't look very friendly at all. The knight is rather tired after his long and perilous journey. If he makes one last supreme effort, then his bride to be will be his for evermore and he can carry her over the threshold in true romantic style as befits a knight of the realm . . .

Presentation 78%
Nice title screen and highscore table.

Graphics 81%
Nice backdrops and the sprites are pretty good.

Sound 92%
An ace tune pounds away as you battle the meanies.

Playability 79%
Tricky initially, but once you learn the landscape things become easier.

Addictive qualities 81%
Zombie bashing has never been more fun.

Value for money 78%
There are worse programs to spend your money on.

Overall 80%
A nice game which is worth having a look at.

CRITICISM

1

Great! At last the great arcade machine has been converted to the Amstrad, but don't look forward to it if you've played the other versions — you may find it a bit disappointing. The game seems to lack all the good bits from the arcade machine — losing your clothes and the big podgy bloke at the end of level one, to name two, but you do get some superb music and above average graphics. The game is not very well structured — after killing the first big bloke if you die you have to go back and kill him again, this makes the game very hard to play and quite offputting. Despite a lot of annoying bits I found GHOSTS AND GOBLINS fun to play and quite addictive, try it.

2

After the excellent *BombJack* and *Commando* I looked forward to *Ghosts and Goblins*, but really I'm a little disappointed and thought that Elite could have done a better conversion than this. They haven't really captured the atmosphere of the arcade game and even as a game in itself it seems flawed and becomes frustrating to play. On the first screen if you don't move and keep your finger on the fire button you can get an unlimited score which is really pathetic and, for me, ruins the game.

3

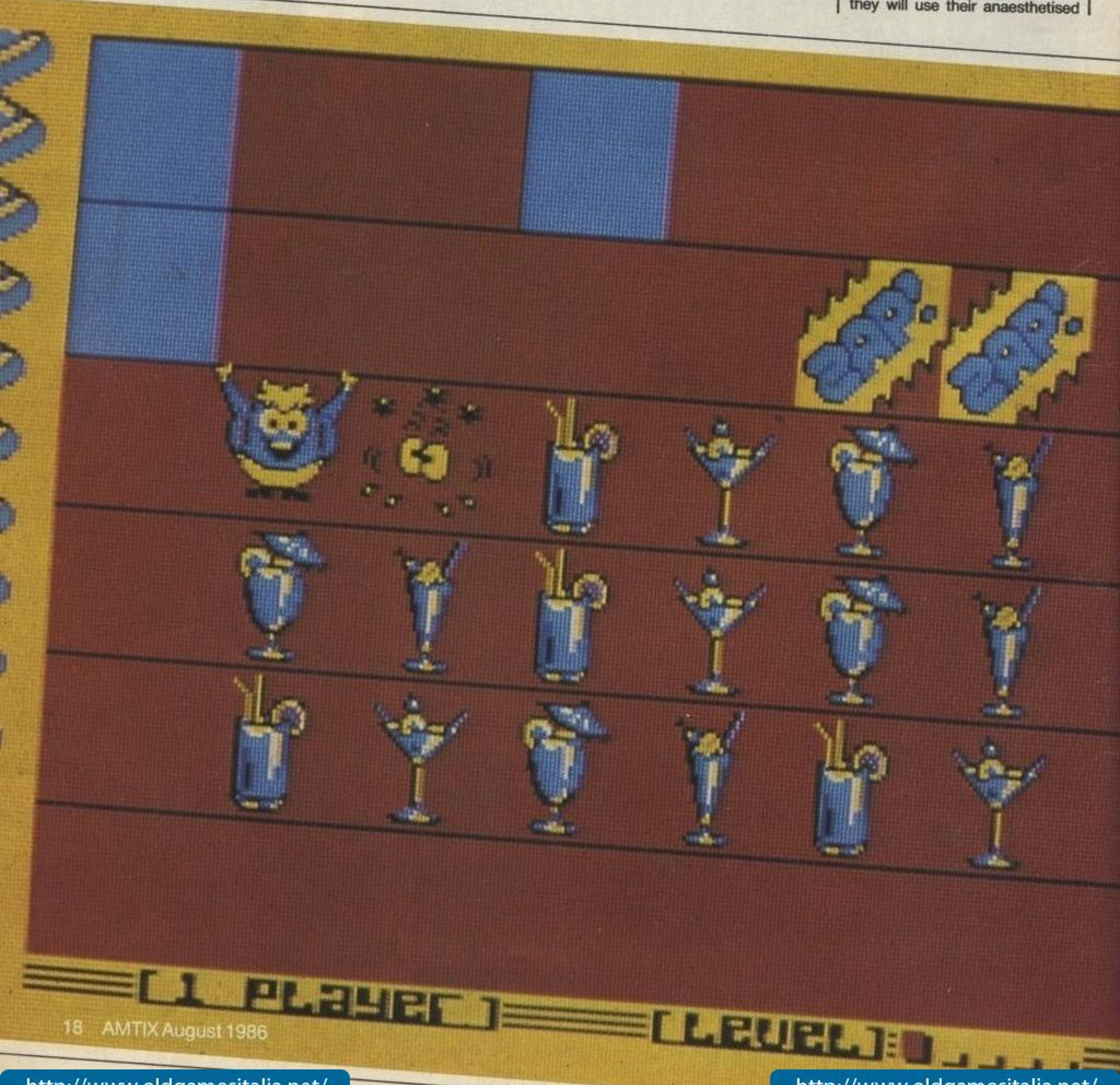
I must say that I'm very, very disappointed at this conversion. After seeing a demo version things were looking really good, but when the final version came in it became apparent that Elite had left out all the good bits of the arcade game: no different weapons, no bag-toting baddies and no losing the underpants when grabbed by a meanie and the layout of the guardians is different too. As a game in itself it's not too bad, although if you have played the arcade version or other computer versions it's highly difficult not to moan about its faults. Play it and make your own mind up.

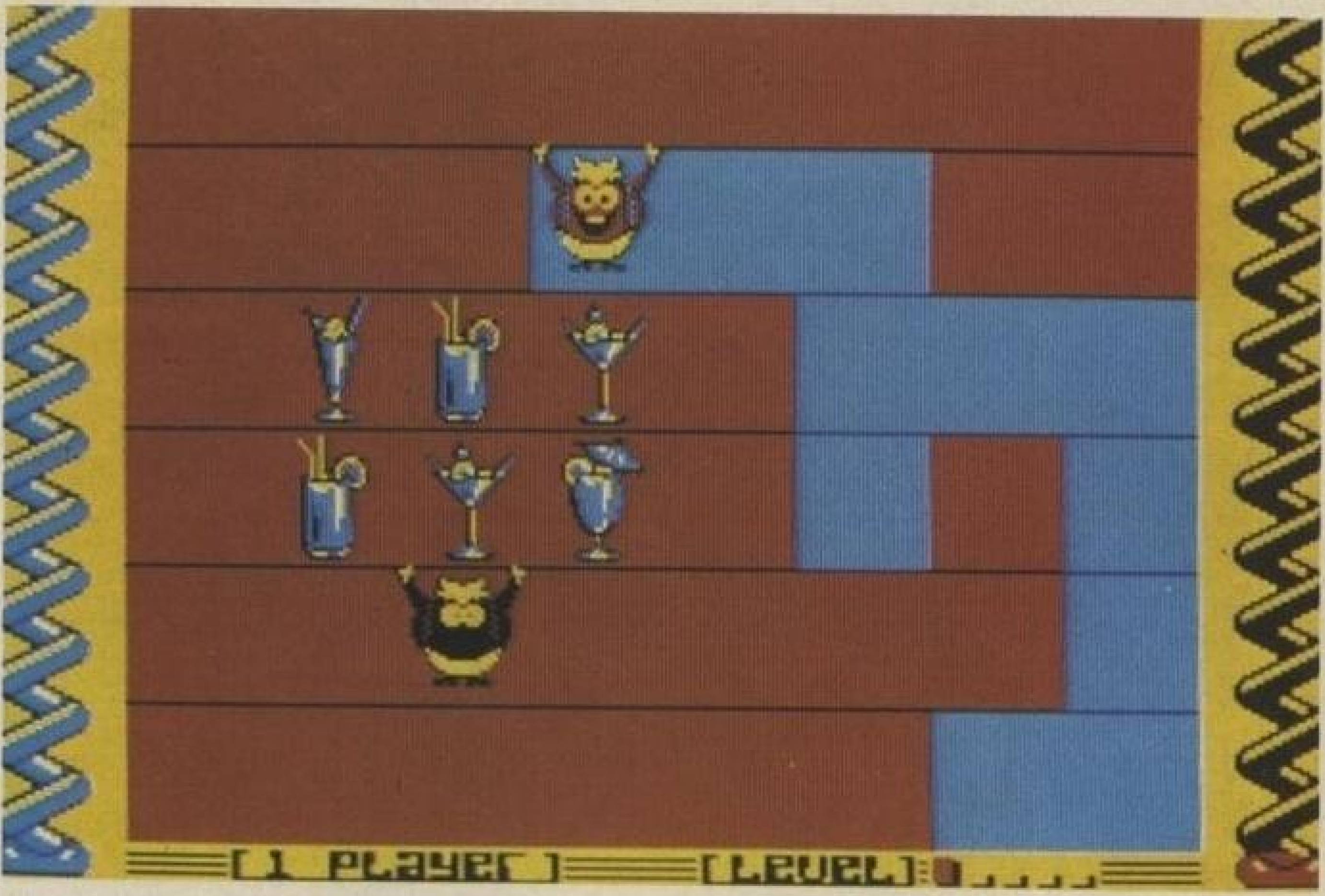
HARVEY HEADBANGER

Firebird, £1.99 cass

199
Harvey Headbanger

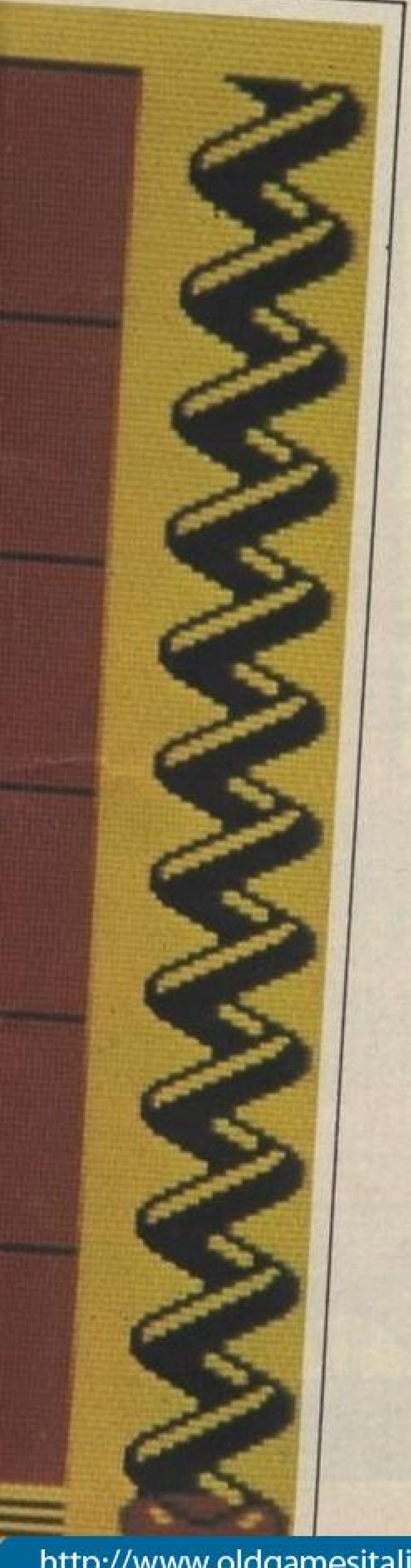
Harvey Headbanger is having a bad time. He's been busy oiling his tonsils with copious amounts of Old Flatulence served from the obsequious surroundings of the Pig and Ball Bearings and now is paying the invetable price of suffering from an awful migraine. Luckily for him it's not an unusual event and neither, unluckily, is it for his arch rival Hamish Highball, who is suffering from the same self-inflicted tense, nervous hangover. Both of them believe, however, that nothing works faster than Anadin but instead of taking nothing when they're in this state they usually find that the best way to discover relief is to run around being very aggressive, and when these two beer-gutted nasties get together it usually ends up in fight. However, straight forward pugilism is all a bit difficult when the body's a bit wobbly and there's all those nasty dancing pink hippopotami to avoid. Yes, fighting's all a bit different with two dipsomaniacal combatants because they will use their anaesthetised





nuts and boinging beer-bellies to bounce each other as far away as possible.

The loading screen gives a fairly good impression about the content of this game, with an archetypal drunk, resplendent with blood shot eyes staring over the edge of a bar whilst Liberty Bell (or the Monty Python theme tune to you lot), plays in the background.



The options in this game are numerous and cover a two player game with definable keys for both players (or one using joystick) or, if there is no-one handy to play with, the computer provides a tireless opponent with five different skill levels. These are changeable at any point in the game by pressing the delete key and a number from 1-5, one being the easiest. The current player level is displayed in the corner of the screen and the game starts with Harvey dressed in blue, swinging almost ape-like across a screen of forty eights blocks in a grid six by eight.

As Harvey moves he turns each of Hamish's blue blocks he passes over into his own colour of red. If you don't like the colour scheme then by pressing DEL and TAB the colours change for one of the eight other arrangements available. Each player tries to outmanoeuvre the other and completely surround their drunken enemy in order to win. If they bump into each other they suffer the most terrible headache and turn a strange colour as they career off in totally random directions. The length of time it takes to recover from these brain-splitting hangover attacks depends on how many 'hairs of the dog' they've managed to gulp down during the course the game as shown by the level of liquid in a straw to either side of the screen. These appear as if by magic at first but after a while the discerning observer notices that by completely enclosing an opponent's coloured area it turns to the player's colour and all squares that were previously unoccupied will then be covered by a mind-numbing cocktail complete with straw. Passing over these results in a slurping noise as the colourful drink is quickly quaffed, increasing the level of your straw and so aiding speedy recovery when involved in a collision with an opponent.

If a player completely surrounds their opposite number then that game is won automatically. The winner is the first one to reach a number of games from 1 to 99 that is set at the beginning of the game with the arrows keys, although making two dipso's like Harvey Headbanger and Hamish Highball fight it out for over a hundred games does seem a little cruel but if they do remember the headaches and try to keep the noise down a little . . .

CRITICISM

1 **Firebird must see this title in the top twenty soon enabling them to buy (and lose) yet another Porche. It's a superb game which is both simple and straightforward in its approach and is one that has excellent graphics and plenty of options included. The animation is simple but very effective and the characters themselves are quite comical. The sound in the game is great and adds to the zany atmosphere. *Harvey Headbanger* is great and at the price of £1.99 there is no reason why everyone shouldn't have a copy.**

2 Okay *Harvey Headbanger* isn't well presented graphically but it is superb fun. This is one of those games that grabs you at your first sitting. Once you've played through a couple of the screens it becomes progressively harder and harder to turn off the Amstrad. The scenario is certainly an unusual one, the main theme seems to be running around, picking up cocktails to anaesthetise the brain, whilst trying to beat your similarly dishevelled opponent. It is so good that I could (and did), sit down and play it for hours. Get it.

3 *You can't really fail to be hooked by this delicious little product. From the very first go it becomes clear that although the game is simple in concept it is one of the most playable programs around. The graphics and sound are perfect and the two player option just plonks the icing on the cake. For two quid it's a steal — this does for the Amstrad what glucose does for the tongue.*

Presentation 95%
Faultless in-game options and instructions.

Graphics 89%
Excellent animation on the characters and the whole thing looks wonderfully jolly and bold.

Sound 83%
Great ditties in the game and some amusing spot FX.

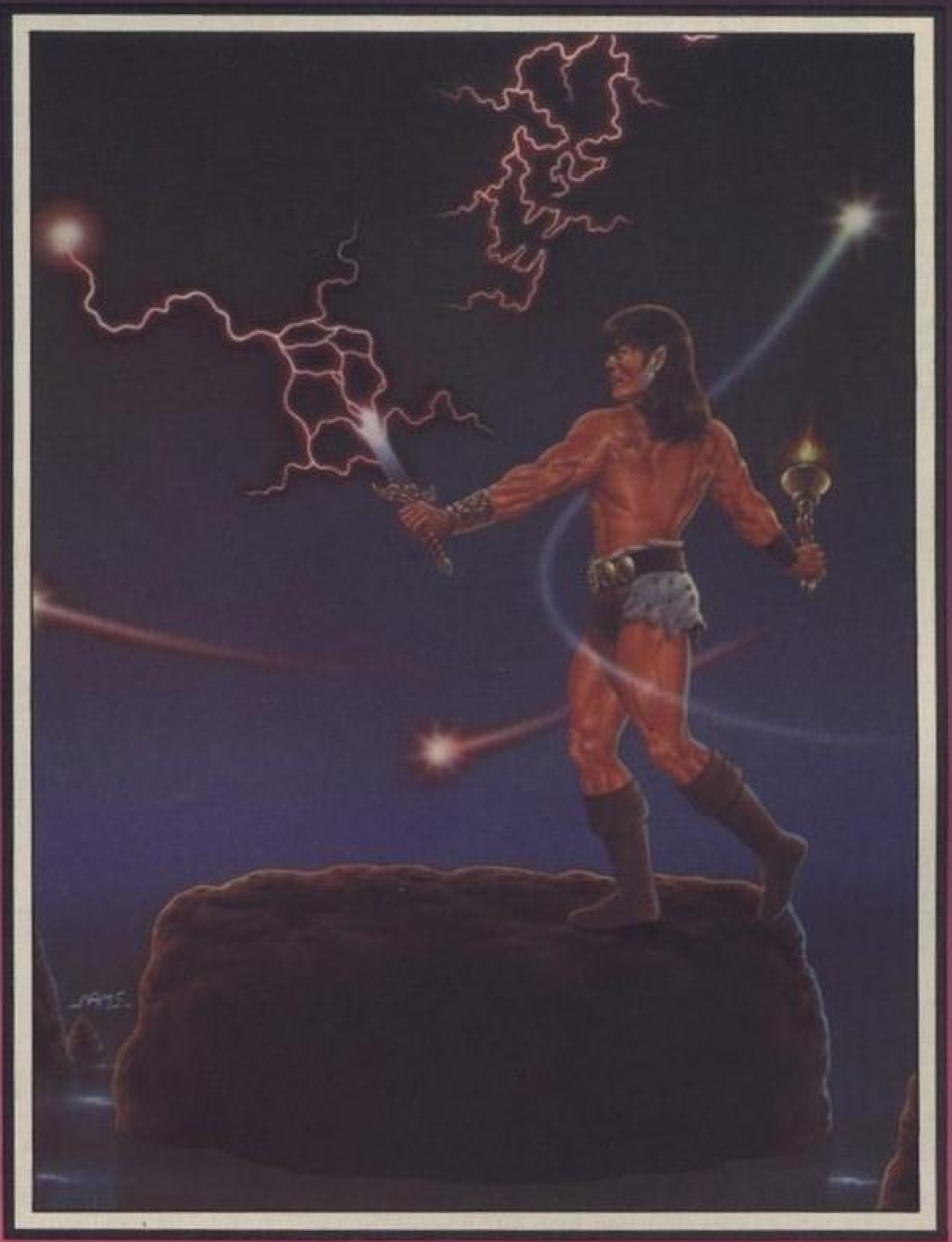
Playability 94%
One is fun, but two is a hullabuloo!

Addictive qualities 95%
Play it once and we dare you not to come back to it again and again.

Value for money 98%
Ridiculously cheap for the hours of fun it gives.

Overall 93%
A riot of fun for one or two players.

MANDRAGORE



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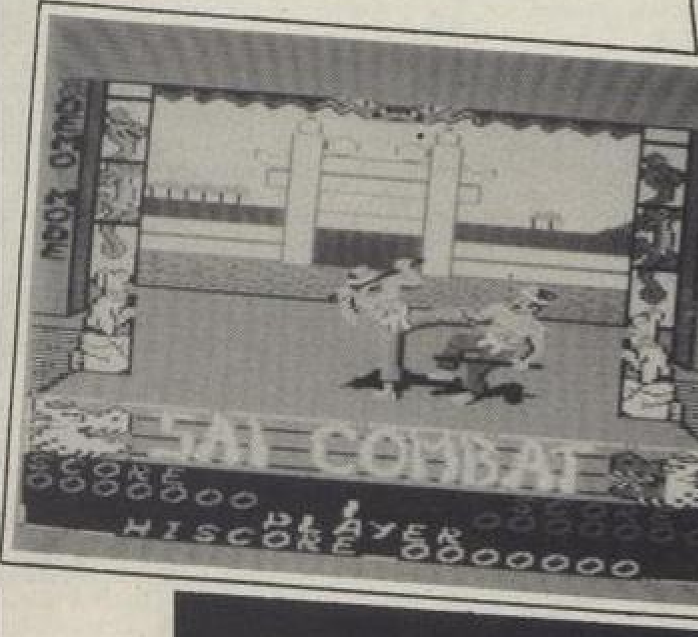
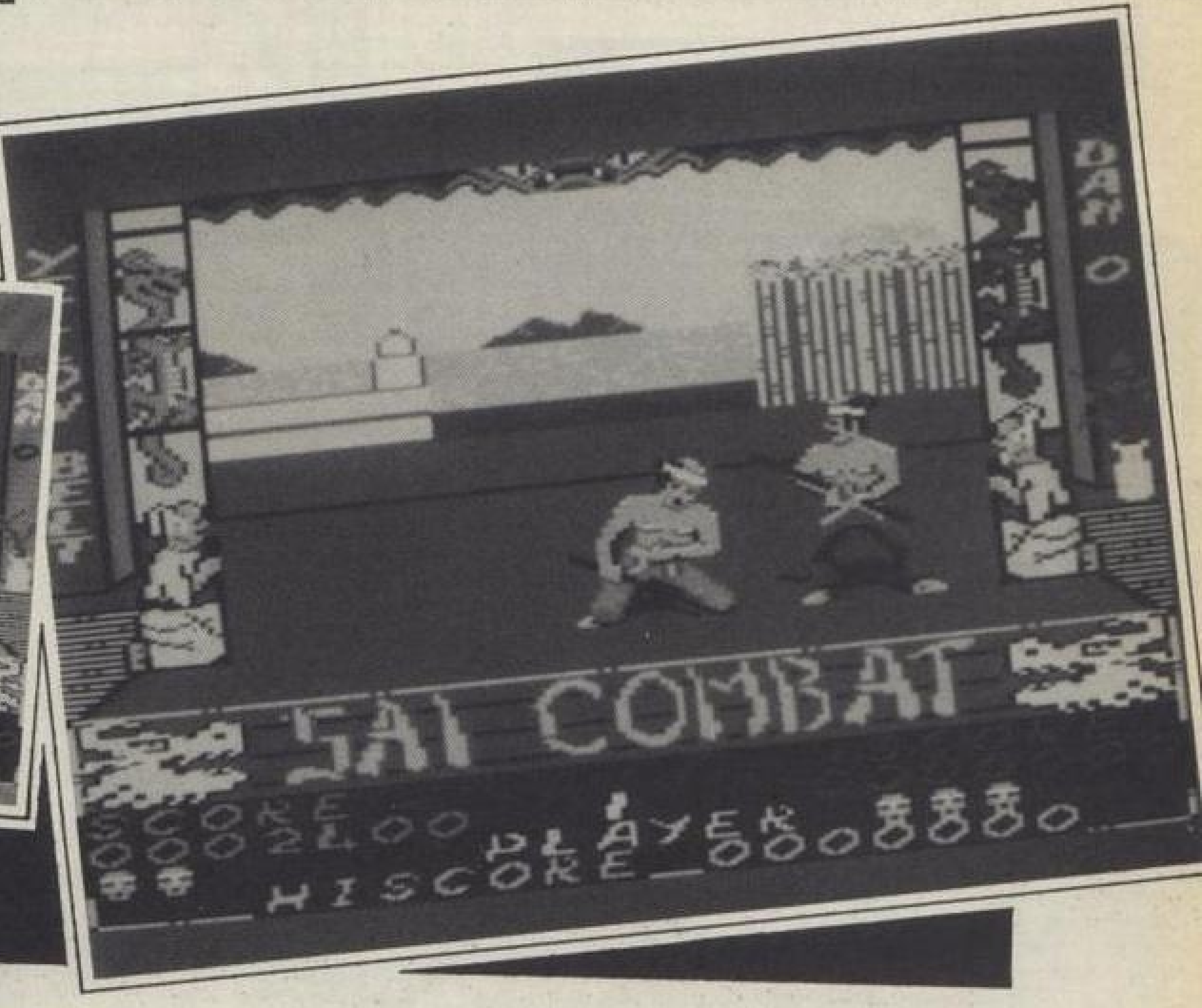
INFOGRAMES

SAI COMBAT

Mirrorsoft, £8.95 cass, £13.95 disk





Bashing each other with hand and fist seems to have become the standard format in computerised fight entertainment. Now the mould has been broken with Mirrorsoft's latest fighting game — you can now beat up the local competition using a pointy stick! *Sai Karate* is a sport where you use hands, fists and bits of wood to thump your opponent into a jelloid pulp, much more fun than just limb to limb combat!

Like most martial arts the Sai Karate evolved in Japan, way back in the depths of time. Students of the art were taught how to successfully wield a stick, or sai, to make attacking and defending moves as well as using the more conventional kicks and punches. The pointy stick involved in Sai Karate hasn't always been used for fighting — there's a type of gymnastic exercise called Sai Kata practised by Japanese keep fit fanatics as a solo art form, but that doesn't appear in this program so all you Aerobics people will have to wait for Jane Fonda's Ammy Workout!

The game follows the traditional pattern of most fighting games where you start by fighting the weakest opponents and as you win you're promoted up a rating. In the game you can either play against a computer or human opponent, but whichever you play you have to defeat sixteen opponents in one on one combat to go from First Dan to Black Belt Sai Master. Each level in the game has its very own oriental backdrop upon which the action takes place.

Once loaded the program automatically goes into demo mode, showing two combatants bashing each other as best they can, illustrating the sixteen different moves made available to a computerised Sai fighter. Selecting either one or two player breaks out of the demo and the fighting begins proper. The players are controlled in the now rather standard beat em up fashion using all eight positions of the joystick (or keyboard) in conjunction with the fire button to produce the various moves. The controls are intelligent so if a player goes past his opponent the controls switch to their mirror image making it easier for the player to control his fighting man. When the players gets back to their original position the controls switch once again.

As the game progresses, the state of play is monitored on the status area at the bottom of the screen. This shows the scores achieved by each fighter — 100, 200 or 300 points are awarded for each blow landed, depending on the complexity of the manoeuvre involved, and 600 points are won for a knockdown. Each of the competitors' Chi, or energy level, is displayed on a dragon's head in the status area. Starting off white at the beginning of a bout, it fills with colour as the player gets bashed. A fully coloured Dragon's head signifies that the fighter's Chi has run out and the next bit of punishment he takes knocks him out.

When playing against the computer the binary opponent has to be knocked down three times before the human is promoted to the next level. Once you're fighting at Dan level, an extra hazard is introduced in the form of Ninja stars which whizz around the screen from time to time. A clout from a ninja star knocks a load off your Chi level, so care has to be taken to avoid them.

The single player game starts on novice level and grants you six falls before your game is terminated. When the lives finally run out, the game returns to the demo screen but it's possible to restart at the level you just expired on — but you only have three lives when fighting recommences. Two players can choose the level at which they want to do battle from the start screen, and slug it out over their favourite background.

Presentation 85%
Great demo mode and one or two player options.

Graphics 86%
Nice animation and very good use of colour with varied backgrounds.

Sound 79%
Nice jingles and some excellent sound effects.

Playability 87%
Initial difficulty with the control, but if you've played this sort of game before you'll be well away.

Addictive qualities 85%
Initially very addictive, but the opponents increase in difficulty only.

Value for money 80%
If you like bashing binary baddies then part with your yen.

Overall 82%
A competent fighting game that's worth looking at.

CRITICISM

1

What a great game! I've been looking for a good fighting game since I bought WAY OF THE TIGER and here it is. SAI COMBAT has excellent graphics with beautifully animated men, and some of the bone-crunching sound effects are really neat. The game is playable too and it kept me coming back to my Amstrad again and again. If you like fighting games this is a must for your collection.

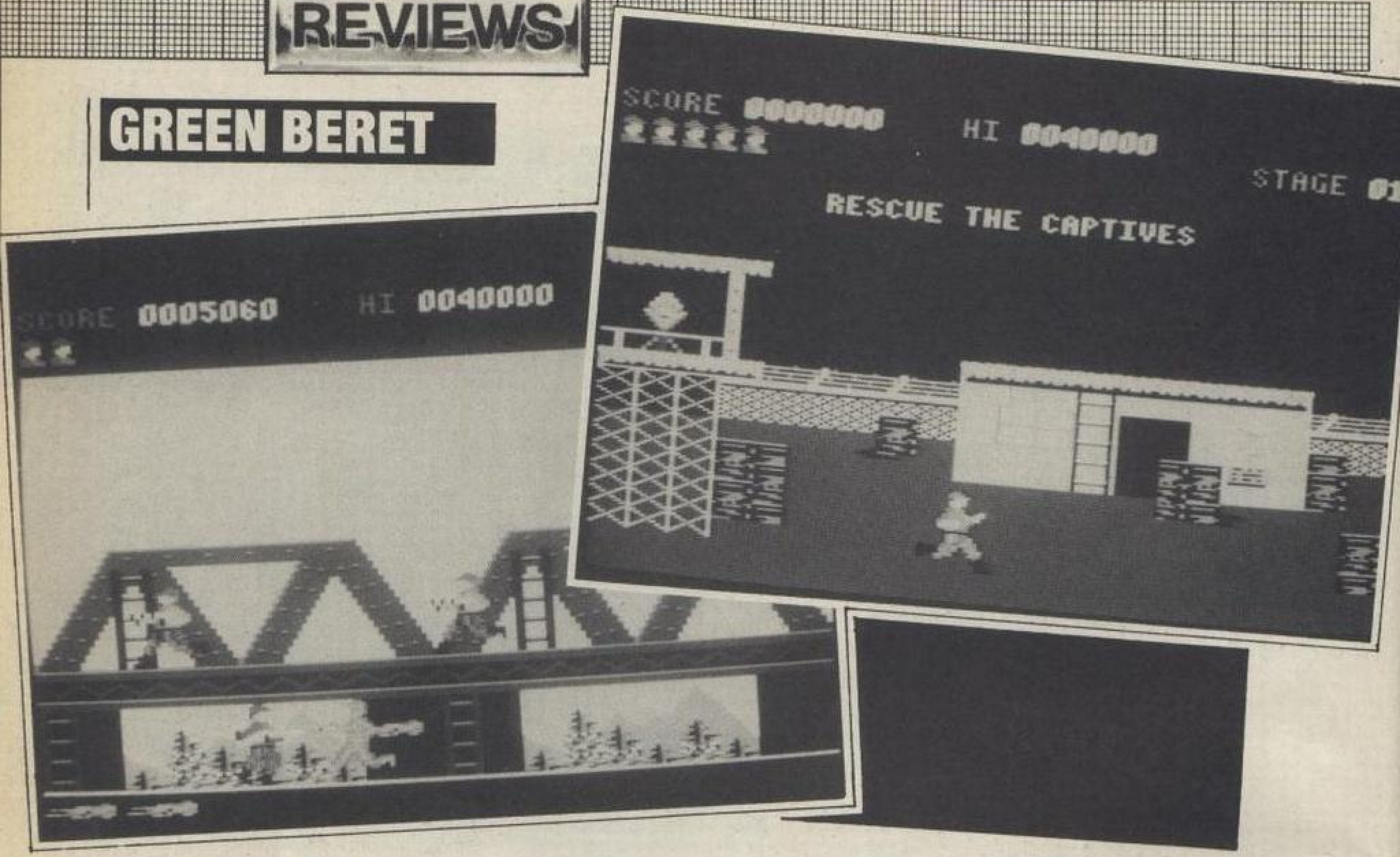
2

I liked playing *Sai Combat* an thought it was good fun. The only problem was that I found myself becoming bored once I'd played it for a couple of sessions. It's not that the game is poor, just that it's another bash em up. I'd like to see some sort of new format for fighting games, they're all getting rather samey. Still, if you like the type then I would recommend this one because everything works well.

3

This is a very good fighting game, although I think that more variation is needed to give it that something special. Really the whole thing is like an EXPLODING FIST with sticks, I'd have liked to see different opponents or something. The graphics aren't bad at all, colour has been used very effectively and the whole thing plays well too. It's worth taking a look at to see whether you think it more or less fun than EXPLODING FIST.

GREEN BERET



Imagine, £8.95 cass, £13.95 disk

CRITICISM

1 GREEN BERET is a slight disappointment, but perhaps I was expecting a little too much. However, it's by no means easy and it takes a fair bit of perserverence before you can actually get anywhere. The graphics are fine and the animation on the men is just like the arcade version. It's a fine game and quite an original one in the way it's played. Take a look at it, there aren't many arcade conversions on the Amstrad of this high a quality.

2 Arcade conversions can be a touchy subject — sometimes the home micro just doesn't lend itself. *Green Beret*, it must be said, is an excellent conversion to the slightly smaller screen, and Imagine is to be congratulated. Of course, there will be many who think the thing is disgusting, all that murderous mayhem, but for the player who wants a fast moving and fairly thrilling piece of action, this is certainly a winner. A major niggle — and one for me that takes the edge off the game's playability — is that stabbing your enemies can be a bit hit and miss at times. The graphics, however, help make up for this. Take a look.

3 Although GREEN BERET is an excellent game I have a feeling that it could have been a tough better. For a start stabbing the men is very difficult — there is no real 'stab area' and consequently it becomes annoying when a man sprints through your offensive thrusts. The graphics are great, although they sometimes clash which is another niggling factor. Still, I think I'm being fussy — it's well worth taking a look at.

First, in a blaze of action, came arcade toughie *Commando*. Then along came another hundredweight of sinewy flesh, *Rambo*. Now, just to show that if you practise twice nightly you too can be a hero, in bursts *Green Beret*, continuing the military microchip megalomania of destroying millions upon millions of enemy soldiers and risking life and limb just to rescue your good buddies who are being held prisoner. Forget negotiation, forget diplomacy, in this game it's you versus the rest of the world. The ultimate action man, Green Beret, has to penetrate deep behind enemy lines to reach his imprisoned chums, and this daring escapade involves rushing through a missile base, around a harbour and over a bridge before he can finally rescue his hapless helpless buddies.

Green is a real hard man and has decided to take on the enemy armed with only a knife, and with this he has to fight off GI Joe Kung Fu specialists, gun toting commandos and kilted kamikaze killers. They all have one thing in common — they all take one of Green's three lives if they touch him. To get knifing just press the fire button repeatedly, any enemy soldiers who are dumb enough to stroll into the flashing blade disappear in a frazzle of exploding flesh.

Green isn't only hard, he's also a pretty acrobatic fella and can leap about and lie down whilst knifing — the enemy just don't know what they're up against. The one man army can also also climb up and down ladders and other battleground objects d'art. Once in a while Green comes across a white swathed Commandant who, if dispatched with a swift thrust of the blade, drops a three shot flame thrower or, on later levels, a bazooka loaded with four missiles or, later still, three grenades. These can all be picked up and used against the enemy with devastating results.

Each of the three scenarios is made up of separate areas. When Green reaches the end of a screen more of the area is scrolled into view until the end of the section is reached. When that happens a lorry pulls up, the enemy pour out en masse and a pitched battle ensues (if you don't have a flame thrower then ring your undertaker).

All the scenes have their own distinctive landscape — the first starts with a series of iron girder bridges connected to the ground by ladders. Green can climb these and trundle along the catwalk, missing most of the enemy soldiers who stampede below. Once the girder bridge has been crossed it's over three rocket launchers and through the missile base to reach the end. When all the baddies have been removed he's automatically trnsported forward to the next mission.

Points are awarded for blowing away enemy soldiers and enemy installations and five lives are granted to Green to make his difficult task slightly easier. Oh, marauding soldiers aren't the only hazard to his health. There are mines, parachutists, dogs, mortar bombers and bazooka carrying nasties who make the going tough, but then when the going gets tough the tough get going . . .

Presentation 81%
High score table, but no game options.

Graphics 83%
Podgy, but colourful sprites and some decent backdrops.

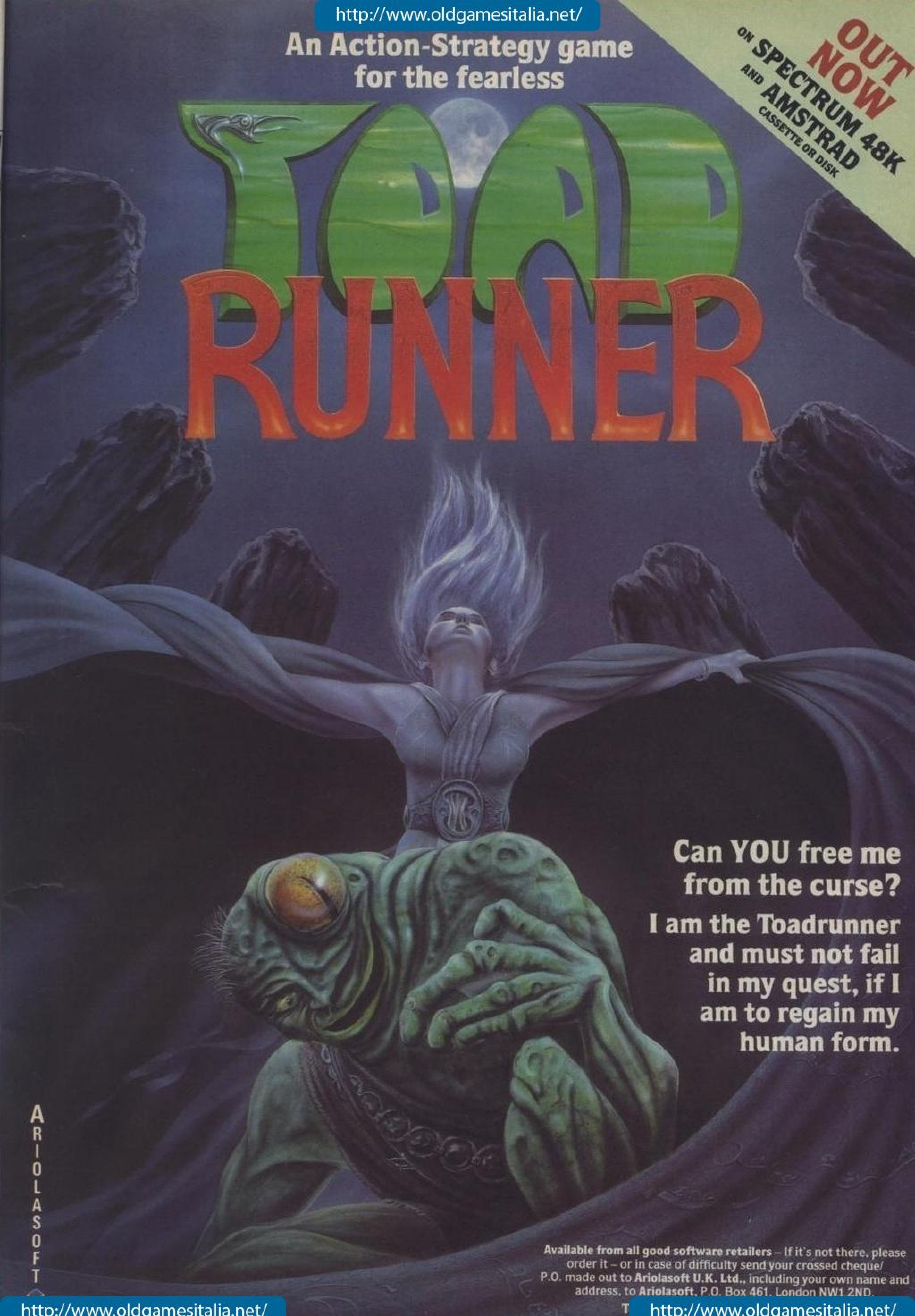
Sound 60%
Driving drum beat whilst playing and effective sound FX.

Playability 77%
It's a tough game and is consequently difficult to get into, marred by Green's mis-stab mode.

Addictive qualities 85%
Getting to the end of each scenario is very desirable, but very difficult.

Value for money 78%
Better than a knife in the belly.

Overall 81%
If you fancy being hard, take a whirl.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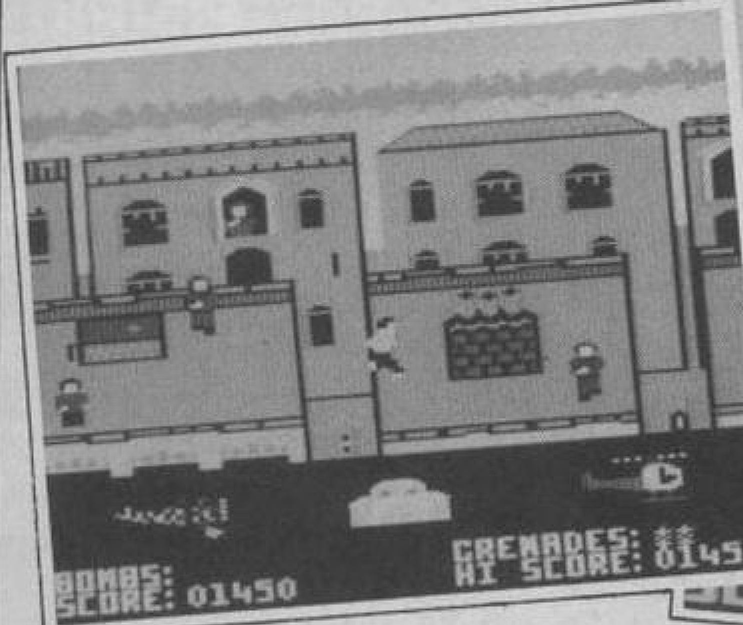
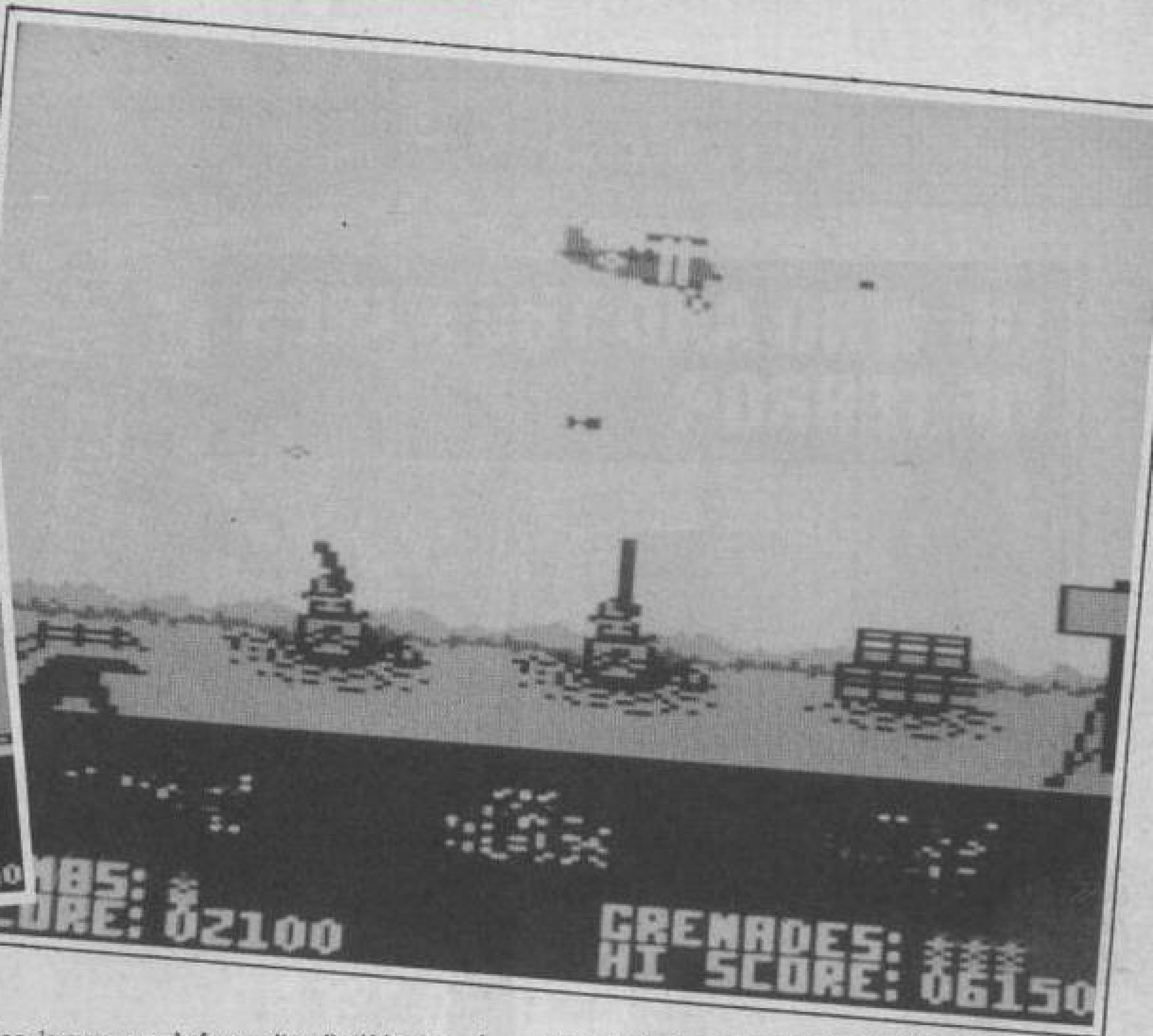
guide by

Nick Faldo

BIGGLES





MIRRORSOFT
Biggles
AMSTRAD CPC CASSETTE

Mirrorsoft, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk

Presentation 78%
Reasonable title screen but no game options.

Graphics 59%
Blocky sprites and poor scrolling.

Sound 71%
The various ditties and spot effects aren't anything to write home about.

Playability 50%
Even spread amongst all three games there's not much.

Addictive qualities 56%
Initial interest generated by the film soon fades.

Value for money 50%
Even the four games together don't merit the expensive price tag.

Overall 54%
Another poor game of the film.

Biggles, is everyone's favourite pilot! You've read about the heroic chappie in his top-hole novels, seen the fellow on celluloid in your local picture palace and you must have heard his thrilling shows on the old wireless set. This game is based on the recent film, where Biggles (set in World War I) and his time twin from the present, become entangled in each other's adventures through a time warp.

The program comes in two parts, each loaded independently. The first section, called *Timewarp*, is in fact three separate games in one and the second, the *Sound Weapon*, is a sort of helicopter fight simulator with a purpose.

The first section of the Timewarp plonks you instantly into the seat of a WWI Sopwith Camel biplane. Flying at a low altitude over scrolling enemy territory in *Scramble* fashion you must avoid enemy ack-ack fire and German Fokker planes who try to shoot you down (although you can shoot them down too). You've three bombs to drop onto guns below, and dropping one successfully onto an enemy ammo dump mysteriously gives you three more. You must keep flying until you reach the enemy's new horrible secret sound weapon and then photograph it.

The next part (similar to *Green Beret*) has you delving into enemy territory on foot. Naturally the enemy soldiers object to your presence and try to stop you with everything they've got, but luckily you're armed with your trusty ole machine gun and a couple of grenades. As you cross the landscape the screen scrolls to show more of the landscape until you eventually reach the secret weapon.

The final sub game is yet another scrolling affair which takes place on the rooftops of London in the present. Biggles has managed to steal a secret code (which helps in the Sound Weapon game), but the police, not knowing he is doing the right thing, are hell bent on capturing him. The only way to avoid them is to leap from rooftop to rooftop. You control both Biggles and his time twin and pressing fire switches the control from one to the other. One problem when playing this game is that the screen can't be scrolled if one of the chaps is lagging behind. The other big problem is avoiding the police patrols — if one of them touches either hero you lose a life.

Throughout this side of the program Biggles is randomly whizzed from one sub game to another, which can be quite unnerving at times. When he dies Biggles is automatically thrown into the next sub game. He has five lives at the start and has to use these to complete all sections.

The other side of the tape/disk is a 3D point-of-view helicopter flight simulator with added bits. Using the helicopter you must fly low over enemy territory and seek and destroy the enemy's secret sound weapon. To do so you must pick up various objects and people who will help you complete your task. The helicopter can carry up to four people and four objects simultaneously, it's up to you to suss out which objects should be carried to where and when.

The helicopter is controlled in the usual flight simulator fashion and there is on-screen information to help keep you flying. When you're whizzing about the airways two maps are available — radar and detailed. The radar map shows the whole battlefield area with you depicted as a flashing group of pixels. The other map shows in detail the area immediately surrounding you and displays the location of enemy troops, people and objects.

Actually completing the task takes some doing, but beating the hun single handedly never was an easy affair.

CRITICISM

1

Aaggggghh! Another of the dreaded games-of-the-film, and yet another complete and utter binary disaster. The graphics are really pathetic with unimaginative sprites and wobbly scrolling. Why companies don't go for original games instead of trying to cash in on the latest film beats me entirely. This is rubbish and a product to be avoided at all costs.

2

I thought that this might be quite good, especially after reading about the film. Unfortunately it's far from that. The sound is reasonable enough but the graphics are only passable. It's the game that's the most important thing of all and even that is poor. What a let down.

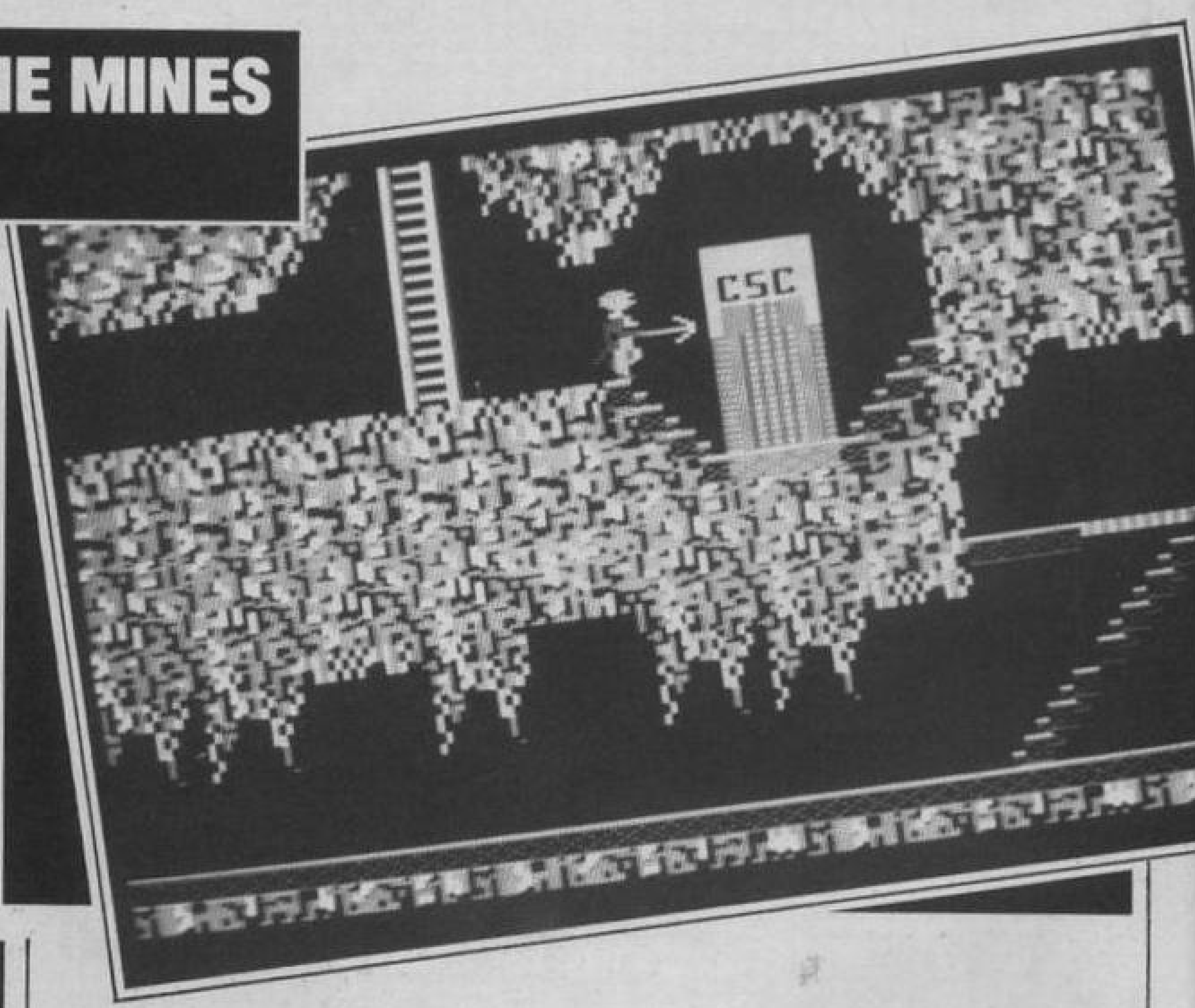
3

I've just seen the film and was consequently really excited about the prospect of a game. The big problem was that after a couple of second's playing I realised that this was just another con cashing in on what was an excellent film. The graphics leave a lot to be desired and way the game works is a real bore. Games of the film tend to be a pretty unsuccessful genre and this one falls into that category.

DR WHO AND THE MINES OF TERROR

POLICE BOX
DOCTOR
WHO
AND THE MINES
OF TERROR
AMSTRAD
DISK

Micropower, £11.95 cass, £16.95 disk



CRITICISM

1 Oh dear what are Micropower up to? DR WHO was a brilliant series and for many millions of viewers it was a cult programme. Although the graphics of this game are colourful they flicker a great deal and are not very well defined. The game lacks interest as you don't really seem to know what is trying to wipe you out. as a game it is very poor but it will no doubt ride on the success of the television programme even though it is priced so high.

2 **Micropower have made their mark in the minds of Acorn owners but they are less well known on the Amstrad scene. *Dr Who and the Mines of Terror* is a very strange game to play, and contains loads of little booklets that explain everything. The game itself is quite poorly presented with only a few spot FX that tend to get on your nerves after a while. The graphics are very blocky but recognisable, the thing that lets them down is the poor scrolling from one screen across to the next, it often looks as if you've got two doctors walking next to each other. I didn't feel that *Dr Who* had a really addictive game to play in it, but if you like the series then you'll find the atmosphere quite convincing.**

3 This game is supplied with such a vast array of instruction books that it would take weeks to remember them all. While it may be interesting to have instructions setting the scene for the plot those with this game are so complicated you are left wondering just what you have to do! The graphics are not that good; they are unclear and flicker a lot when animated. The game is one of the least addictive yet and there is no urge to succeed. I would not recommend it to anyone but ardent fans of the Dr Who series.

After year upon year of wandering about the universe in the Tardis and fighting such lovely creatures as Daleks, *Doctor Who* is now a computer game from the Leeds software house, Micropower.

As usual the good Doctor is pitted against that well known time bandit, The Master. The nasty man has managed to get his hands on the plans for the Timelord's TIRU device, a handy little bit of technology that is the temporal equivalent of a video editor. Slices of time can be chopped from the continuum and altered allowing the future of the universe to be changed. Obviously if you are a megalomanic lunatic then the possibilities are endless and one thing The Master wants to do is to make himself immortal, setting himself up as the Devil at the beginning of time. This has to be avoided like the plague for as the saying goes better the devil you know!

The Master has holed himself up in the *Mines of Terror* on Rijar — a unpleasant place where Heatonite is mined, the mysterious raw ingredient needed to make a TIRU. The day needs saving and time itself needs a saviour who is used to saving days (and the universe): in fact someone like Doctor Who.

The whole game is a full graphic interpretation of an adventure with a large number of psychologically contortionate problems to be solved. Unfortunately, as emissary of the Timelords, the Doctor isn't allowed to possess any weapons when he beams down to the mining complex on Rijar, not even the awesome sonic screwdriver. This leaves him a little defenceless should he come into contact with any of the controllers patrolling the mines in search of intruders. These devices are quite dumb but if the Doctor ever comes close then they become raucous in their mash-up-the-civilian mode. The controllers' main disadvantage is that they can only travel along the metal walkways constructed for them.

The Doctor himself remains central within a scrolling window as he roams up, down, left, right and jumps about collecting and using various objects found in the huge complex. Four objects can be held at any given time and these are shown at the top of the screen. Using the function keys, it's possible to manipulate the items.

Though there are no weapons supplied to you, a Splinx is. This weird creature looks exactly like a household moggy but is in fact a highly sophisticated robot that's immune to detection from any of the aliens. Pressing S takes you to a programming screen which allows a set of instructions to be created and executed by the Splinx. These are fairly simple but can enable the Doctor to get at items he normally wouldn't be able to reach.

To complete the game the plan has to be retrieved from the lab and then returned to the Time Lords. A fair bit of help is given via the packaging which includes a full blown, though not very detailed, map of the mining complex.

Presentation 70%
Above average but over long and not outstanding.

Graphics 50%
Not up to the standard achievable on the Amstrad.

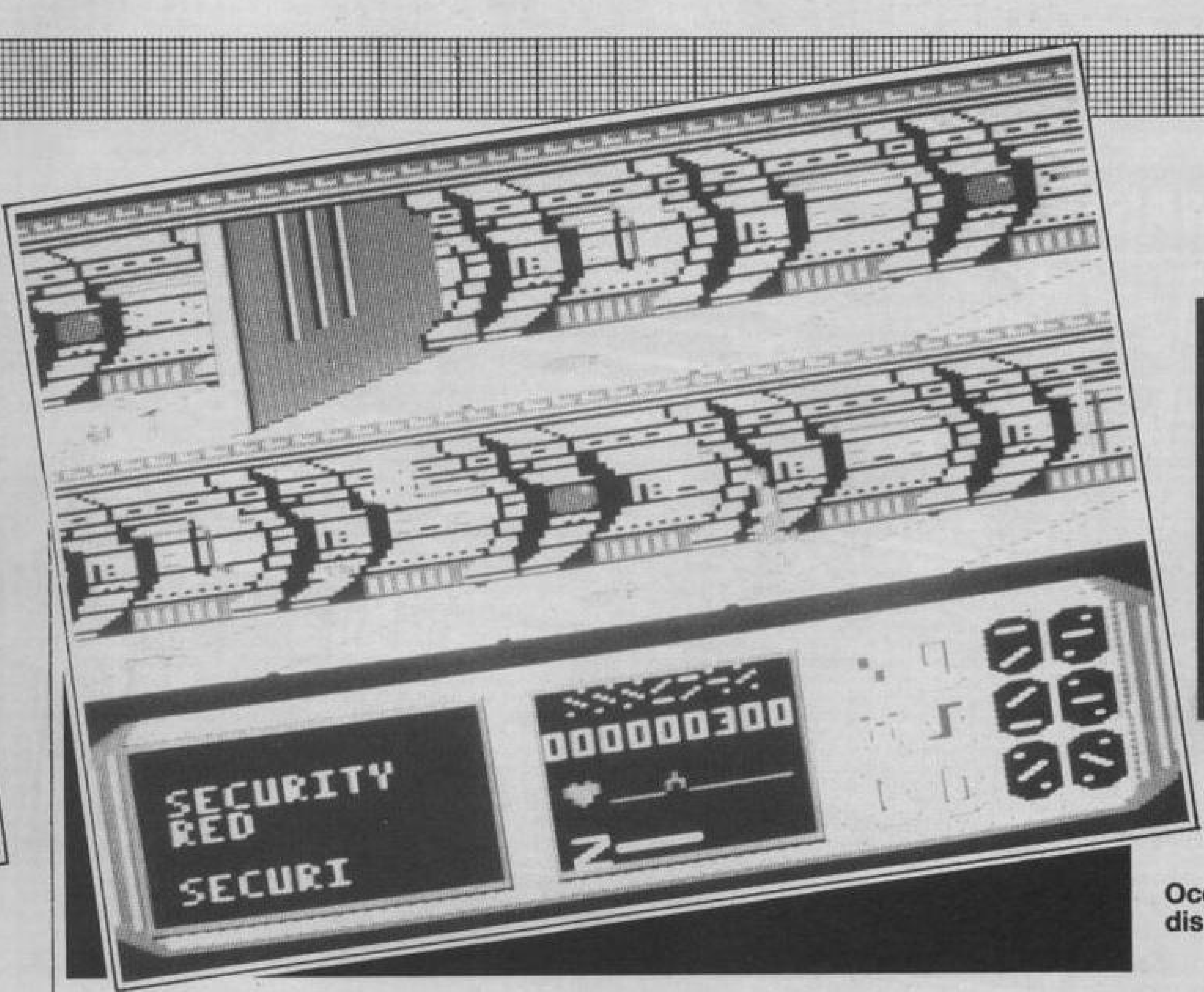
Sound 49%
Just a few boring spot FX.

Playability 45%
Lacks the compulsion to see through to the end.

Addictive qualities 44%
The ingredients simply fail to add up to any lasting appeal despite the large playing area.

Value for money 45%
At three quid more than the usual, this is well overpriced for what is on offer.

Overall 48%
Disappointing end product for a cult television programme.



V

AMSTRAD DISK
ocean

Ocean, £8,95 cass, £14.95 disk

According the the great one-eyed god, television, a load of alien spaceships came to Earth. They weren't filled with bug eyed monsters but, to everyone's chagrin, looked just like yer average American. As not much was known about them, one fine day a true blue American hero called Donovan sneaked onto one of the spaceships to find out exactly what the aliens did in their spare time and saw what he thought was a beautiful young woman gobbling a live guinea pig, followed by a whole hamster (the animal, not a computer buff)! Shocked, he sat there pondering, when suddenly he was attacked by a guard, who tried to rip his clothes off. In the midst of the fight he scratched the guard with his nails. RRRRrrip! Bad move Donovan! The guard's face came off to reveal a scaly lizard head below! Oh dear, the alien visitors were lizards in disguise and they had come to Earth to eat lots of humans and steal all the water. Dan dan dan dahhhhh!

Donny rushed back and told everyone about his adventure and a resistance movement was formed which drew up a plan to destroy the evil aliens. Donovan was smuggled aboard the visitors' mothership once more, this time armed with a laser gun and a comniputer stolen from the visitors. His job sounded pretty cushy — just troll round to the five key points of the ship and plant a bomb in each. Nice and easy, eh? Just get out in time and detonate the bombs to blow the slimy lizard geeks to kingdom come.

You play the role of Donovan and take control of his actions just after he's boarded the ship. There are five different sections to a ship and each has many levels. Like all TV aliens, they have no imagination when it comes to interior design, so the various levels look rather similar and it's all too easy to get lost. Thankfully, only two levels of the ship are shown on screen at one time. Donovan can move either left or right along a corridor and when he reaches the edge of the screen a new section scrolls into view. Red mat transporters appear at regular intervals along the floor and by standing on them Donovan can move up or down a level.

The game starts at the end of a corridor. Oddly, the Lizards have gone on holiday and consequently there are none roaming around the ship. What they have left though, are four different types of droid: maintenance, cleaner, surveillance and security. If Donovan touches any of them the electric charge generated strains his heart, and if he spends too long in the presence of one he dies of a heart attack. The gun can be used against them but he can only shoot at shoulder height and is therefore defenceless against maintenance and surveillance droids, as they trundle out of reach along the floor or ceiling. Security and cleaner droids whizz around at head height and can be blasted with ease. The gun may be recharged from terminals in the walls on some levels.

There is another method of destroying of the robots, but first you have to find and assemble the formula for the Lizard-killing Red Dust. The parts of the formula are dotted around the various laboratories in the ship and if they are found and the dust is made and dissipated then lots of visitors get killed, slowing down robot pursuit in the process.

Donovan's comniputer has twelve functions, each displayed as an icon but they're in Lizardspiel, and it's up to you to work out which icon does what. Clever use of the comniputer can reveal your current location and the locations of the key points.

Presentation 48%
Oddly incompetent title screen and no game options or instructions to speak of.

Graphics 41%
Pathetic, flickery sprites and boring backdrops.

Sound 6%
A few crummy spot FX.

Playability 27%
Very difficult to get anywhere.

Addictive qualities 21%
Run about a bit . . . boring really.

Value for money 21%
Not a lot for your pennies.

Overall 22%
A great way of sending the Lizards home — just show *V* to them.

CRITICISM

1

What a complete and utter load of rubbish — another triumph for hype over game quality. The graphics are really awful and the Donovan sprite is absolutely pathetic — look at the animation and laugh, unless you've bought it, then cry. The sound is rubbish, the game plays badly and the whole program is a shoddy mess. Avoid it like the plague.

2

Ocean's large and mixed output has come up with some gems, and to their credit, the rest have generally been very good to above average. *V*, unfortunately, goes down as probably the company's worst game ever. It has a lot going for it, an enjoyable TV scenario, plenty of promised action and an on-screen appearance which is attractive though not particularly colourful. But, that's where it ends. There simply isn't enough game or enough variation in the content to make this enjoyable to play. In fact the word I would use to describe it is 'dreary' and I have a suspicion that invention ran out early on in the game's design.

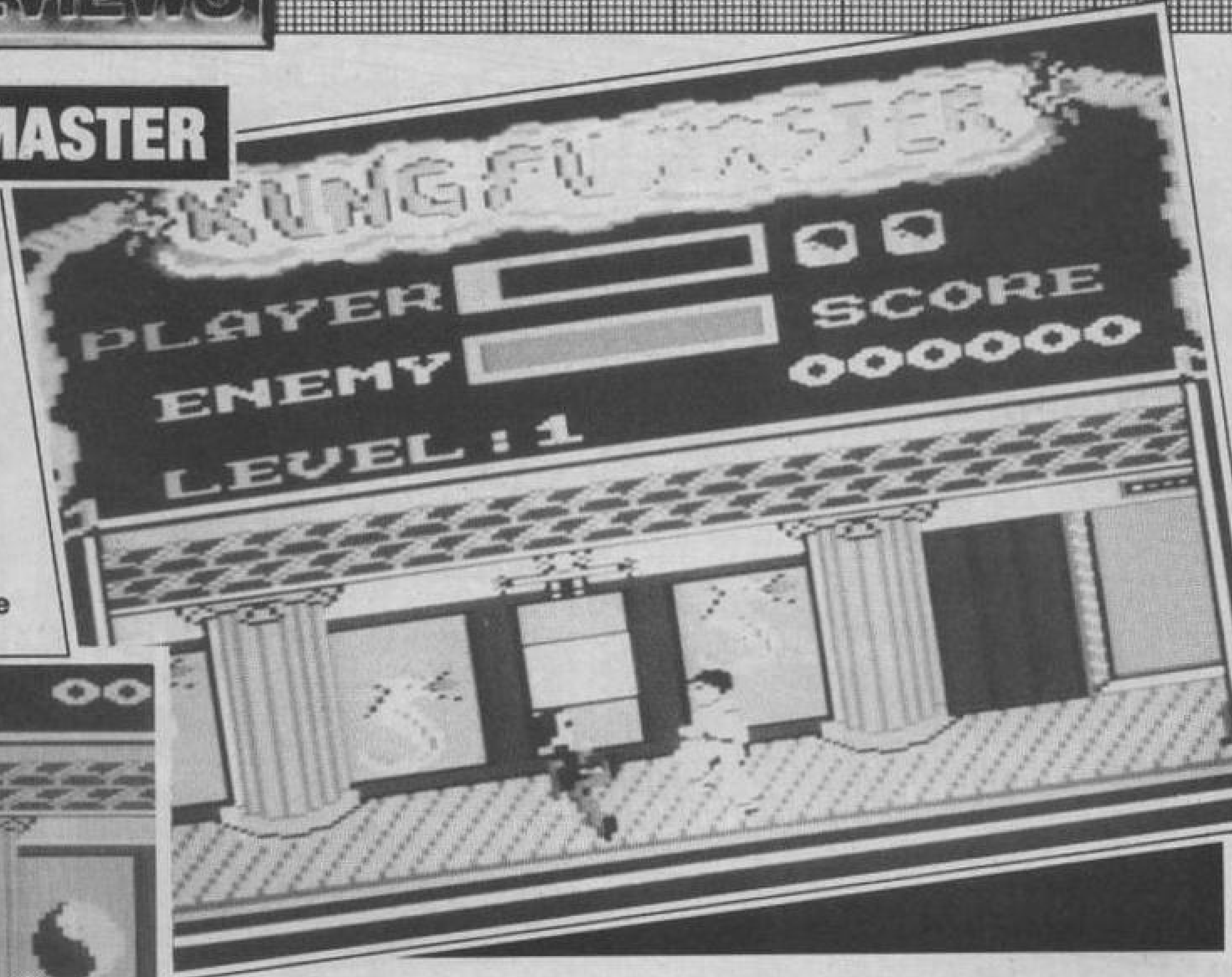
3

Oh dear! What are Ocean playing at? V was a brilliant series that kept me enthralled every time it was on, but this is completely the opposite. The colour is about the best thing in the game, everything else is very poor including the playability and graphics. V has left me very disillusioned and I only hope that someone, somewhere can show everyone that it is possible to translate a TV show to a computer game successfully.

KUNG FU MASTER

KUNG-FU MASTER
THE OFFICIAL CONVERSION
AMSTRAD

U S Gold £9.95 cassette



CRITICISM

1

KUNG FU MASTER is yet another martial arts combat simulation game but for once the location is not a paddy field or a Chinese pagoda. Instead you are in a building with lifts. The game is not amazing, in fact more the opposite! The graphics are colourful but not very smooth or clear, in fact a bit blocky in places. It's just an average game and there are better martial arts ones already on the market.

2

In computer terms *Kung Fu Master* is no spring chicken with the original Data East arcade version gracing many a pub corner several months ago. The game on the Amstrad falls far short of the arcade version with well animated characters being poorly defined and the need to use the space bar to change between kicks and punches being very annoying and lessening the game's playability. If you've never played the arcade version you may enjoy *Kung Fu Master* but if you're expecting the game you found in the arcades several months ago you may well be disappointed.

3

Martial arts games are becoming more and more popular for the Amstrad and I have to confess I am starting to tire of all the physical effort required. As conversions go this is very playable but it does have a limited number of attacking moves. The graphics are quite neat but not the best I've ever seen for a beat em up. KUNG FU MASTER does have a lot of addictive qualities and is very playable.

Oh no, help, help! The cries of a beautiful fair maiden recede into the distance as she is carried off to be held captive in the dusty and gloomy recesses of the Wizard's temple. She is fair and innocent and as such must be rescued from a fate worse than, well..you know. The task of her liberation falls, not surprisingly to you. Not being a Chinese transvestite you can't enter with drag-on (sorry). No, using only the awesome skills of Kung Fu, taught to you by the Grand Daddy of Grasshoppers, you must liberate the displaced damsel from the the less-than-savoury attentions of her captors.

She is held on the fifth level of the tastefully furnished apartments and heavily guarded by numerous oriental thugs. They are all lacking in the scruples department and forgo the Chinese water torture and use whatever inscrutable means is at their disposal to bring your daring rescue to a premature and grizzly end. Like all baddies they do not respect the fact you have no weapons other than your speed and skill. Not only that but with the orientals being known for their lack of risk taking, some of them carry a variety of energy sapping instruments from throwing knives to boomerang looking doobries—all of which pack nasty punches to reduce your energy. This is shown by the player's energy bar, displayed just above the action packed scene.

Watch it! Once energy reaches zero it's a long way down and back to the beginning of the current level to use any of the lives remaining. By using either a joystick or the specified keys, the player must control the progress of the Chinese chappie as he beats his way along the raised passages of the temple using the four cardinal joystick directions for jump, duck, left and right. Pressing the fire button provides either a kick or punch with the space bar flagging between the two. Being a newly refurbished temple, it is complete with all mod cons as the hot and cold running nasties testify, so upon reaching the end of a corridor the next level is up via the lift.

Unfortunately each lift has a guardian who won't let anyone use it and the only way to handle him is to fell him with a few well-placed blows. Each time contact is made the bar, representing the enemy's energy, reduces until someone loses. The vanquished is forever fallen as he is thrown to the ground which unfortunately is quite a distance below.

As the game progresses, the task becomes more difficult with knife hurling hooligans, jumping dwarves and killer bees to contend with, as well as exploding balls, dragons and floating globes. Well, no-one said heroics were easy. Your score is displayed on the right of the screen along with how many of the three lives are remaining. Bonus points are awarded for how much energy is left when moving up a level and an extra life is awarded with each increase of 40,000 points. Should you prove to be a worthy adversary and amass a reasonable score then it is displayed on the high score table along with your name, initials or even a number if you have a name like Pork Ribs . . .

Presentation 69%
Colourful packaging and comprehensive instructions.

Graphics 70%
Colourful but could have been more clearly defined.

Sound 37%
Unimaginative spot FX and no in-game music.

Playability 71%
Loses out because of its limited number of attacking moves.

Addictive qualities 70%
With martial arts games it's very much a case of survival of the fittest.

Value for money 69%
The going rate for an average martial arts game.

Overall 71%
Disappointing conversion of a popular arcade game.

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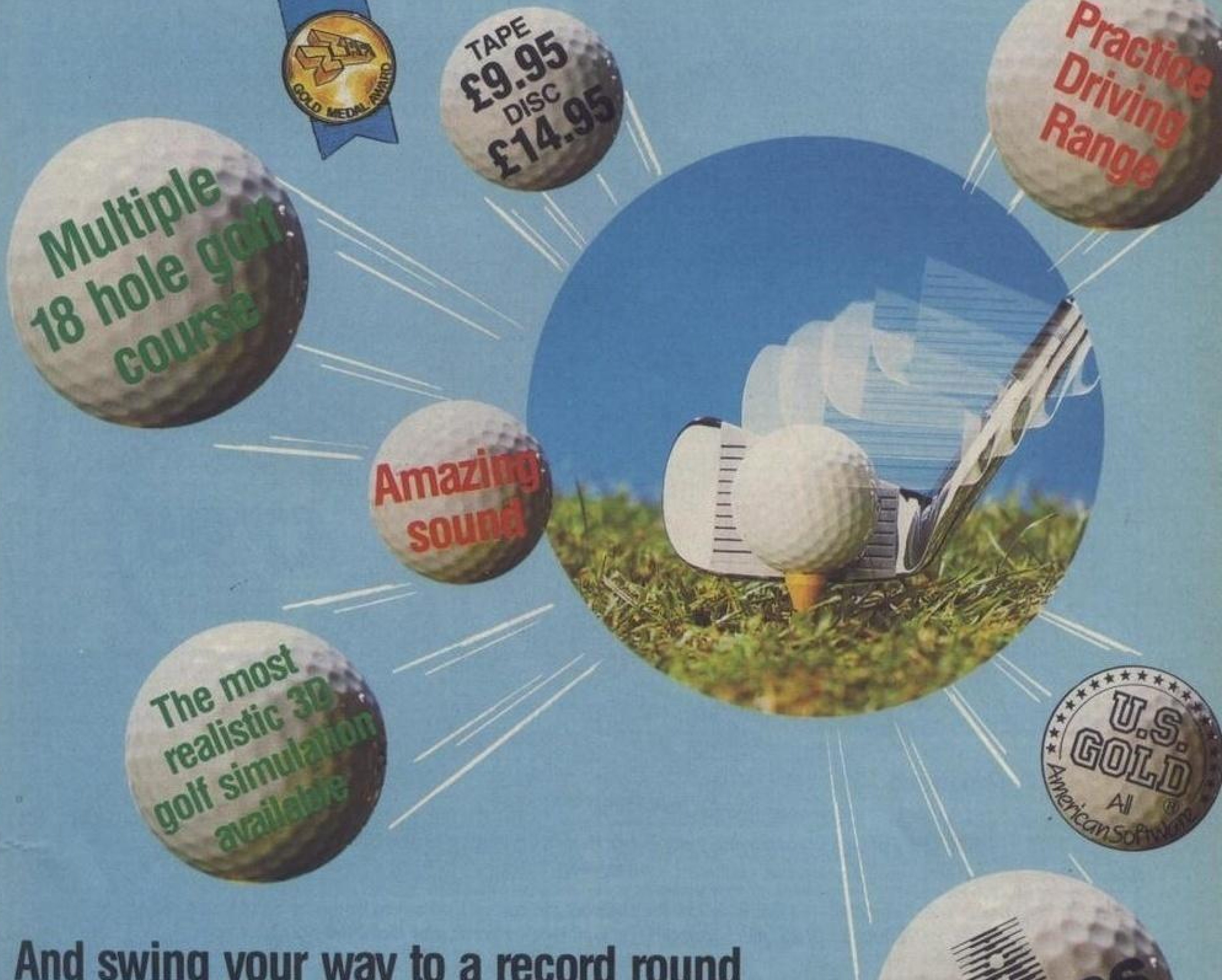
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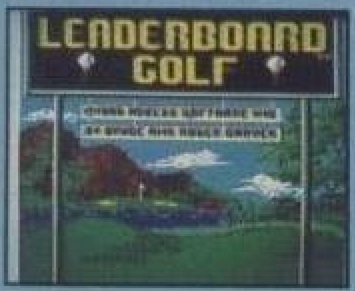
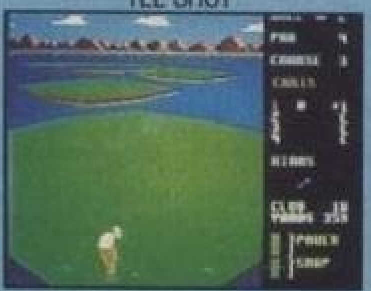
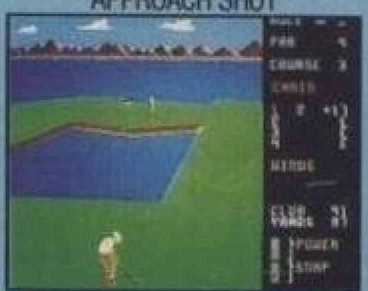

LEADERBOARD GOLF

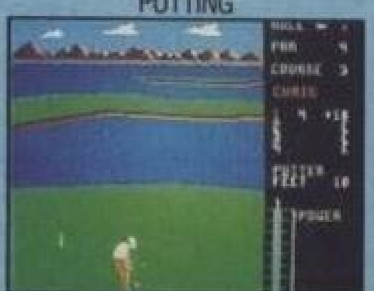
TEE SHOT



APPROACH SHOT



PUTTING



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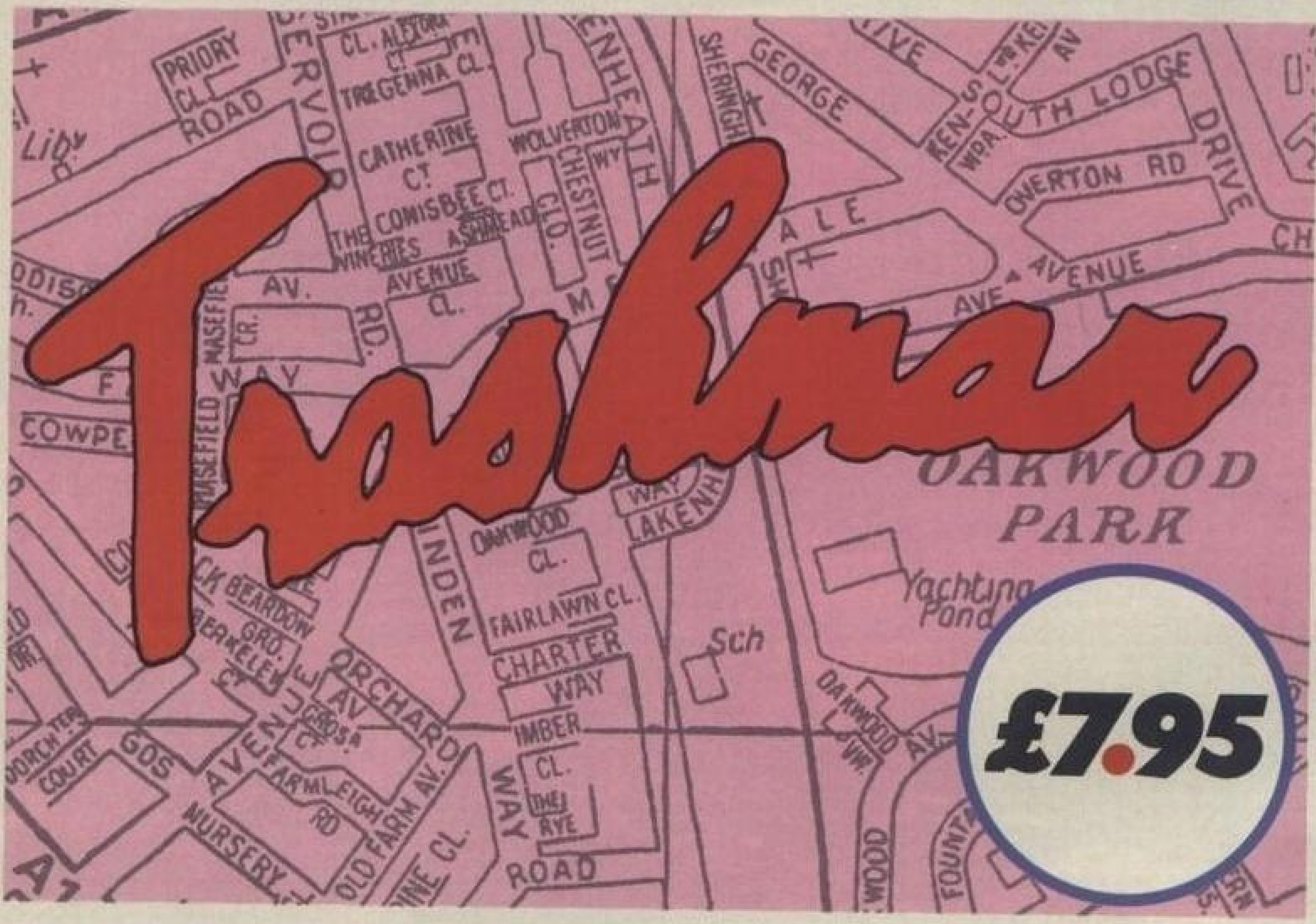

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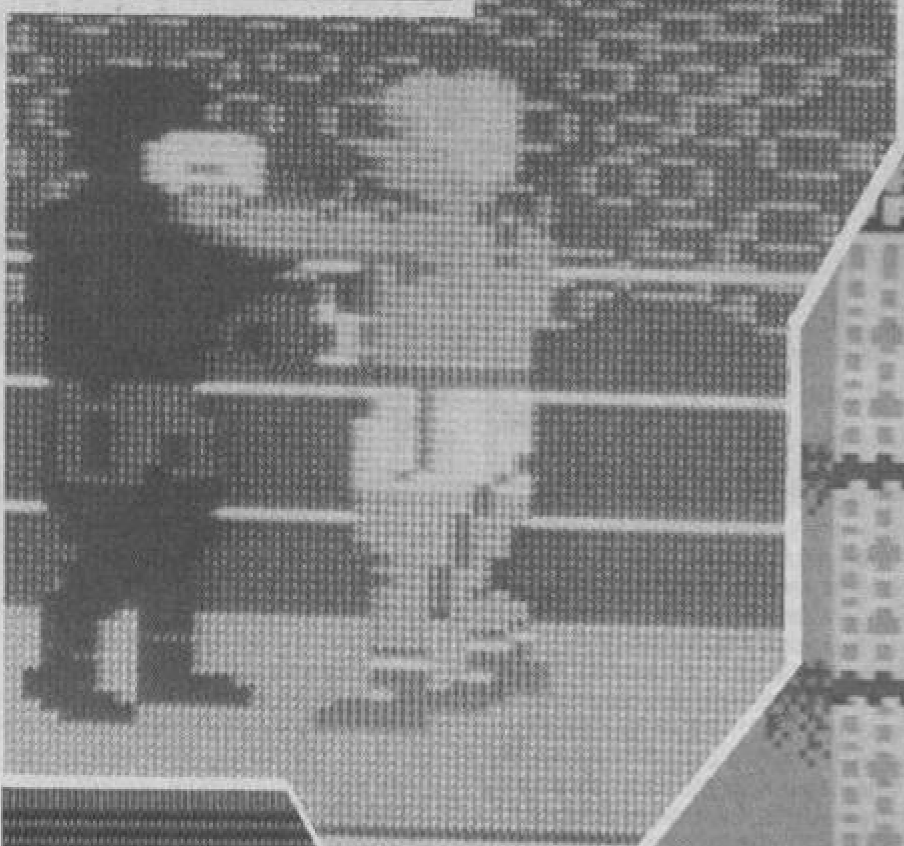
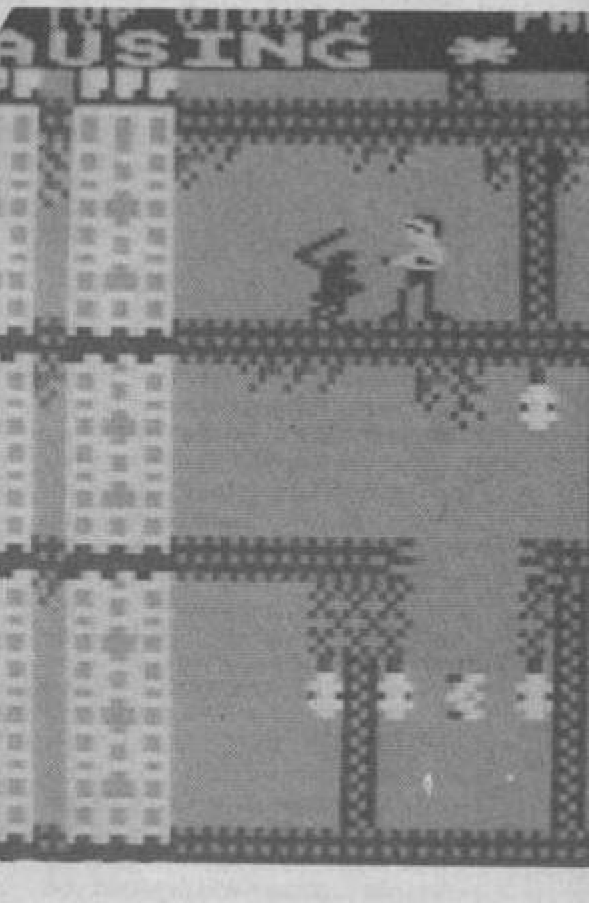
INTRODUCING A NEW TAPE TO DISK TRANSFER UTILITY

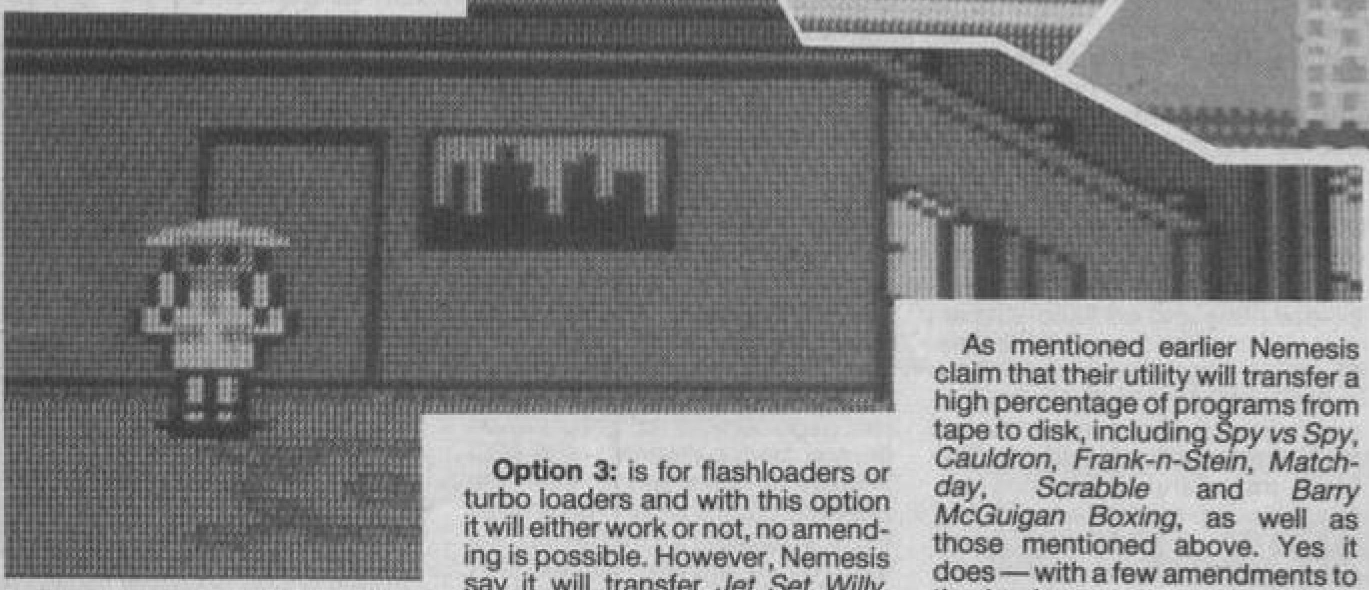
PAUL SHERREARD tries out the BONZO MEDDLER from NEMESIS and discovers it is good at its job

The *Bonzo Meddler* is a new tape to disk transfer utility from Nemesis promising to transfer a high percentage (80%) of your existing games to disk without the need to amend the original program too much — if at all. More of this later.

The first thing you are presented with on loading *Bonzo Meddler* is a copyright warning and an ear bending note designed to grab your attention and draw it to this notice! After a short pause it's straight into the menu of options available. **1:** A straight forward automatic tape to disk transfer which will handle most of the programs you might have. Those that are made up of 2K blocks etc. Using this option there is an automatic relocater to cope with parts of the program that overwrite **AMSDOS** (your disk operating system). It is possible to bypass this function if so required — say if the program is too large for the memory available with **AMSDOS** in place.







Option 2: is for headerless files, such as those contained in *Mr Freeze, Red Arrows, Boulderdash* etc. What the program does is to load in the file from tape and then create its own files on disk with possible sub files. The example given in the information sheet is for Ocean's *Kung Fu*, which when used with this option creates a file **BACK 1** and **BACK 2** each with sub files. All that remains to do is to change the basic loader program to load **BACK 1** and load **BACK 2** etc. The sub files are all loaded in automatically. A hint is also given on how to amend programs that contain a tape command so halting the disk loading procedure.

Option 3: is for flashloaders or turbo loaders and with this option it will either work or not, no amending is possible. However, Nemesis say it will transfer *Jet Set Willy, Bruce Lee*, and some of those listed below.

Option 4: catalogues the disk with the facility to examine more closely the contents of the header information for each file, ie file type (BASIC, binary etc), the start address, file length and the execution address. This can be displayed in either decimal or in hex — the choice is yours.

TOGGLE SWITCH

There is also a 'toggle' switch from the main menu which allows you to turn the tape motor on and off, which saves pulling the remote plug to position the tape for transfer.

As mentioned earlier Nemesis claim that their utility will transfer a high percentage of programs from tape to disk, including *Spy vs Spy, Cauldron, Frank-n-Stein, Matchday, Scrabble* and *Barry McGuigan Boxing*, as well as those mentioned above. Yes it does — with a few amendments to the loader programs. However, I had a difficult time transferring some of my own programs to disk — even with all these options available some still would not go! Still Nemesis do not claim that it will transfer ALL programs but it will cope with some of the more difficult ones which it does admirably well. They also provide a news sheet which contains hints and tips on those more awkward programs FREE!! (Just enclose a SAE).

And there's more!

Also contained on the tape is a program called *Cutedisk*, which like *Bonzo* will transfer from the tape onto disk using a very small amount of memory so it is quite feasible to keep a copy of this on your disks.

Cutedisk again is run from a menu and allows 6 functions. 1) catalogue a disk. 2) Display the header information (as for Bonzo above). 3) Change the filename (saves having to resort to strings (£'s) and using the **BAR** commands as in **AMSDOS**). 4) Delete files without **AMSDOS** again. 5) Save files from disk to tape. For those infrequently used files, save them to tape which frees disk space, or for providing tape backups or your disk programs. Bonzo will transfer them back again with no problem. Finally option 6) will list a protected basic program. All in all a very good and useful set of utilities and at the amazingly low price of £5.00.

RESERVATIONS

My only reservations apart from the problems I experienced in transfering programs, to disk (although this is no fault of *Bonzo* just the programs I was trying to transfer) there is a silly and very annoying display bug in the extended catalogue function — in that the headings, ie length, start address, execution address etc. are erased by the actual file information as you must keep your own copy of which column of figures refers to which heading. The other thing that worried me was the amount of back-up support that can be offered. I refer to Pride Utilities of course with their **TRANSMAT** tape to disk utility. They now have in their library nearly every problem program and the solution in transfering it to disk — something that must have taken a very long time to accumulate — and this should be considered when purchasing a tape to disk utility, because although *Bonzo* will transfer a lot of programs there are many that cannot be transferred and so the back-up is probably more important that the transfer utility itself!

PUTTING BRUNWORD UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

ANTHONY CLARKE examines a new word processor from Brunning Software

Every computer has its fair share of word processors but the Amstrad seems to have developed a habit of producing a new one every few months, this could lead to problems over which one to choose. But for great all round use *Brunword* from **Brunning Software** seems to be a clear winner. The package boasts most of the well known features including a 21,000 word spelling checker, expandible to 30,000 words, and a word count facility (something not found even on **Locoscript**) with the major omission of a mail-merge facility. The manual seems a little on the small size for such a complicated program but the instructions that are there are clear and precise with useful examples at every step, including an exercise section to teach you the fundamental steps of wordprocessing.

TIRED EYES

The program supports a full 80 column display for normal use and a **Tired Eyes 40** column display for use over long periods or when you have a colour monitor. Switching between the two modes does not upset the layout of your text as it is stored in memory in an 80 column format. Unlike *Tasword*, *Brunword* does not automatically right justify, instead you must type **CTRL** and **W** to justify the whole text or **CTRL** and **B** to justify a single paragraph when you have completed your work. Text is entered in the normal way with any words that overflow to the right hand margin wrapping round to the line below.

A quick experiment with this found that if a word is longer than the current line and at a later date the paragraph is justified then the program could either lock up or change to mode 0, though it is very unlikely that you will ever be in this situation. Full cursor control is supported, using **SHIFT** and **CTRL** also, as is **INSERT** and **OVERWRITE** modes. The typing speed is very fast, even touch typists will have trouble beating it, but the same cannot be said for the screen update which happens every few seconds when the text may lag behind a little. Each time the screen is updated the entire text buffer is emptied onto the screen so the text seems to appear in bursts. This would be no problem for copy typing but if you are composing on the screen it can be a bit off putting. Both margins are supported with the ability to set up local margins so that a paragraph of text can be set in from the surrounding text.

TEXT ON SCREEN

At all times the text is shown on screen in the same way that it will be printed, for example, instead of using control characters in front of the the relevant text for super or subscript the screen shows the characters in the relevant mode. This is true for nearly all printing styles with the exception of **bold** face and *italics*. (See note 1).

Brunword prides itself on the neatness of the text and so it is no surprise that it uses a different system of justifying text to other word processors, instead of filling up the line with spaces from right to left, it places spaces first before all punctuation marks if they have not already got spaces before them and then adds spaces equally to the left and right ends of the text moving in until the last word reaches the end of the line.

This has the effect of stopping the text looking bunched up at one end. At times this effect may not be desirable and so fixed spaces may be included in the the line using f4 key, these are never moved so, for example, the start of a paragraph will not move the left hand edge when justified. Full block move and block copy are supported so marked paragraphs can be moved if they seem to be out of place, but the most useful additions to these are the **WEAVE** and **TEAR** commands. **TEAR** allows you to 'tear out' a section of text and save it to memory so that it can be 'weaved' into the text at a later date. Each section of text torn out is given a name for the internal directory or file space. When text is saved you are given the option of saving the file space so that frequently used sections of text may be stored for later use. If the **GET** command is used instead of **WEAVE** then a file is loaded from the file space into the main work area and then **KILLED** from the directory.

The **GET** command is used mainly when the workspace is not empty and you have tried to load a new file, thus safeguarding the current text being worked upon. The opposite of get is **MEMORY** save which saves the whole workspace to memory, after requesting a filename, but does not clear the workspace, this is useful if the workspace text is about to be manipulated in such a way that might render it useless. The **FIND** command is used in the normal way but restricts the length of text to be found to 15 letters, treating upper and lower case letters as the same and all gaps as one space, this means that if you were looking for the section containing 'Dear Sir' then searching for 'DeAr SIr' would still yield the correct result.

All printer functions are supported with default settings for *EPSON* and *EPSON* compatible printers. If there are some codes specific to your printer then you are allowed to send up to 15 codes to the printer before any text is sent. Both single sheet and continuous stationery are supported with a facility for up to 255 copies. It's possible to set the number of lines that your sheet of paper covers, usually 60 unless you are using a footer, in which case this must be calculated, headers are automatically accounted for. Pressing **ESC H** allows you set up both headers and footers or switch them off depending on your needs. Special characters can be used to format left, middle or right, the '□' being used to signify the start of the middle and the '*' to show the end of the middle.

If a '?' is encountered in either the header or footer then the current page number replaces it when printed from between 1 and 999. Instead of printing out files one after the other to make up a book etc, it's possible to print group files that could be saved on any number of disks. Group files have &&& or &&&£ before any other text so that the software knows that it is a group file. &&& signifies that before each file is printed a form feed is sent while &&&£ turns this option off. Headers and footers are taken from the last file loaded and there is provision for a change of disk during the printing process.

Text files can be saved in either *ASCII* or in *Brunword*'s special format, with a security code being used to encode any text saved in the special format if you so desire. Pressing **Z** allows the security code (up to 8 characters) under which the text is saved to be changed. Once the security code is entered and verified the program can encode the saved text. If the text is loaded back at a later date then there is no way to read it unless the security code is known, this option is not available when the text is saved as an *ASCII* file. It is unfortunate that *ASCII* files from *Brunword* cannot be ported across to other Word processors such as *Tasword* as each paragraph is saved as a very long line whereas *Tasword* saves a file line by line. All the normally available **BAR** commands are available so files may be renamed or deleted from the disk. CAT is accessed using the bar command structure also.

The spelling checker is quite large, with 21,000. When called it loads the dictionary in four parts and once loaded need never be loaded again as it is stored in the upper 64K of memory, unless you are using a 464 or 664 in which case you must load the dictionary each time you wish to check the text. If **X** is pressed then the checker gets to work, flashing each word as it is tested at the bottom of the screen, text can be marked for correction and when a mistake is found you have the option of entering the editor to correct it. Of course you can save correct but 'mismatched' words to the dictionary or continue without doing anything. Spelling help is offered through a hunt for words which match closely the word that has been mis-spelt. This is done twice, the first search being very rigorous and the second a bit more hit and miss. This means the most likely word are shown up first followed by the less likely ones. If the screen gets filled up then the search pauses to allow you to abort or continue searching.

The spelling checker is reasonably fast with a rate of about 450 words in 15 seconds, barring errors, the 464/664 version is much slower at 450 words in 60 seconds. There is, though, one major mistake, and that is its refusal to ignore numbers such as 50 or 464, instead it waits as normal for you to correct it or save it to the dictionary etc, surely a small patch could have been entered to rectify this?

All in all *Brunword* is a very competent program incorporating many features missed from word processors double its price. At £32.00 for the 6128 version and £31.00 for the 464/664 it is very well priced and should become a classic word processor with only a minor niggle about the screen update speed.

USING
DR LOGO
ON THE AMSTRAD
LOGO
USING LOGO
ON THE AMSTRAD
by MARTIN SIMS
CPC6128

Our educational expert, DAVID PAUL, peruses a book on DR Logo

The Amstrad version of Logo — *DR Logo* — seems to suffer from a remarkable lack of attention considering its educational potential. Anyone who has used any version of Logo in an educational context should have no difficulty with *DR Logo* as it is an enhanced version of the most widely accepted form of the language — L C S I Logo, originally developed by Seymour Papert and Joseph Weizenbaum.

At present any book dealing with *DR Logo* is unusual and should warrant some interest from educational researchers, teachers, students and interested parents.

Glentop are one of the first publishers on the scene with *Using DR Logo on the Amstrad* by Martin Sims. The book deals with *DR Logo* version 1.1 which is provided free when the Amstrad disc drive is added to the CPC 464 and is bundled with the computer in the case of the CPC 664 and CPC 6128. An additional enhanced Logo is also included with the 128K computer to take into account the larger memory.

In its 240 pages and eleven chapters the book takes the reader gently through — from actually loading Logo from side two of the CP/M System — Utilities disk and some 50 or so Logo commands, to programming with Logo and playing a numerical guessing game.

The pages themselves are numbered with reference to the chapters in which they appear — so that if you want to look up the Logo Primitive (command) **setpc** in the index, you will find it listed as **setpc 6-9** meaning that there is information on this topic on page nine of chapter 6. This seems a rather cumbersome way of finding your way around a reference book and is a method used in some American software manuals. The otherwise good **Terrapin Logo**, running on the Commodore 64, was let down by a reference manual organised in the same way and disliked by almost everyone who had to use it. Surely the aim of a good reference manual should be to make life easier and not to present extra problems.

CONTENTS LOOK CURIOUS

The contents pages also have a curious look about them being more reminiscent of a Victorian School Primer than a book dealing with a computer language. For Chapter Two, for example, the contents page reads:- 'Having mastered some fundamental commands, the reader is now equipped with the ability to use procedures (programs). Readers are encouraged to 'nest' these procedures as subroutines. The need for planning and forethought in the design of procedures is established. The concept of angular rotation is introduced and Logo's ability to use both text and graphics acknowledged. Recursive activities are introduced with the use of the REPEAT command.'

This reads as though Mafekin has not yet been relieved. Why not just call Chapter Two :- 'Procedures, Recursion and using the Textscreen and Repeat commands'?

In spite of the odd page numbering system and contents page, the book is easy to follow and moves at a slow pace to accommodate the newcomer to Logo. As each primitive, and its abbreviation, is introduced, it is indicated on the page by being enclosed in a box which commands attention. There is no summary list of commands which would have been helpful.

Chapter One explains the use of the direct commands to control the screen turtle, using these simple commands it is possible to draw basic shapes on the screen. By Chapter Three, the commands for moving the turtle in a non-drawing mode and line erasure are dealt with so that more ambitious pictures should be possible.

When enough commands and the idea of procedures has been explained the command **Printout** (PO), is introduced, this will display the contents of a procedure on screen for checking. This version of Logo does not send graphics or text to a printer directly from the keyboard and the usual commands to control a printer — **printon** and **printoff**, are not available.

The **Make** command for including variables appears in Chapter Six and this makes development of procedures much more flexible.

MATHEMATICAL INPUT

There is a good mathematical input in the book but a lot can be achieved by younger children without any involved maths being called for.

In addition to the usual **graphics with a turtle** the manipulation of text is met in Chapter Ten with the primitives **Butfirst** (bf) and **Butlast** (bl) and the scope of Logo to include work in English as well as Maths and Logic is explored — there is a procedure for a random sentence generator and a **random** poetry-writing program.

At the end of each chapter there are projects and problems to work on to ensure that the point made in the chapter is understood — to save you kicking the keyboard about, the answers are given in chapter twelve.

The book is well produced and indexed (with the odd page reference system) but there is no mention of the importance or development of Logo as a computer language — nor is a booklist for further reading included.

Whilst not the essential reading for beginners in Logo that it could so easily have been, *Using DR Logo on the Amstrad* should nevertheless be welcomed by those anxious to make a start on the subject as it offers far more than the Amstrad **Logo manual**.

Using DR Logo on the Amstrad by Martin Sims, is published by Glentop at £8.95.

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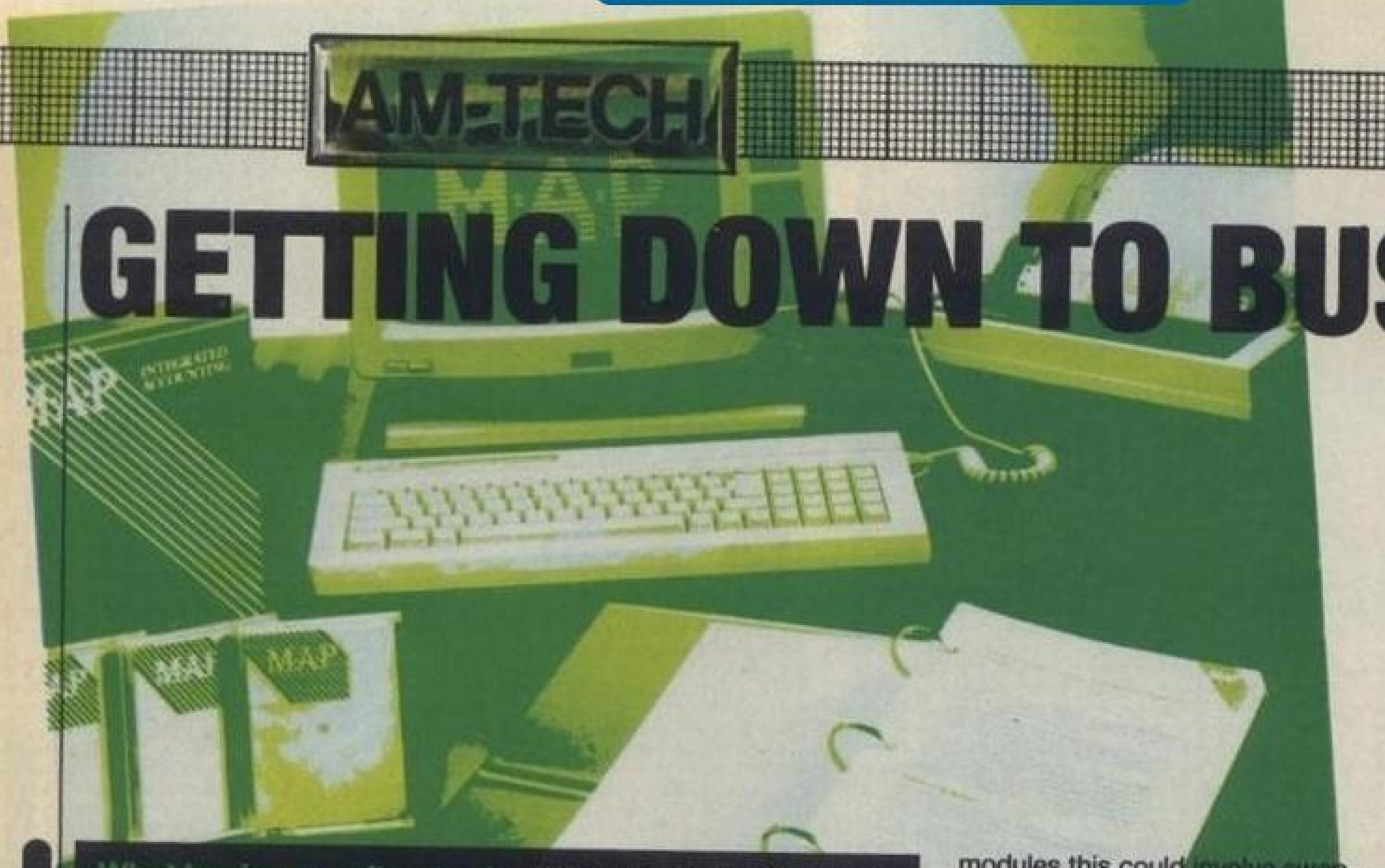
GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS



What business software should you look for if you are using your Joyce to run a small business.? **DAVID PAUL** investigates and takes a look at M A P Computer Systems.

If you visited the recent Amstrad Show you might have been surprised to note that the number of PCW's greatly outnumbered the CPC machines. One reason for this is undoubtedly that the Summer season is not the one when computer games are much in evidence but another reason is the success of the PCW machines for small business users and home/business operations.

The size and interest in this sector of the market can be gauged by the number of offerings on show which present a bewildering choice for prospective customers. If you read the literature outlining the software you will find that most claim to solve almost all the problems that might arise whilst running a small business; looking after the accounting, stock control, payroll, invoicing as well as the word processing and mail shot facilities.

In spite of some extravagant claims a computer can be a considerable asset to this type of business—saving both time and labour and helping to bring order to what can so easily become chaos. Bank Managers and Accountants would also be grateful to have documents presented to them in an acceptable form in preference to some of the home-made systems they have to unravel.

What should one look for when choosing software for a small business operation? The software must do its allotted task well and be flexible in use, no one can write a program that will suit every range of circumstances and commercial application. Large concerns use computer programming consultants and have their software **tailor made**, this is efficient but costly and anyone who is considering this sort of expense will not really be thinking about settling for much less.

To enable computer use to grow as the business grows application programs should be capable of expansion or be purchased in modules, capable of integration, as the need arises.

Manuals must be well put together and be easily understood; sending someone on a training course or having a part-time secretary or member of the family sat studying a complicated manual for overlong periods of time is not going to make the computer the asset it should be.

SPECIALIST EXPERIENCE

Specialist expertise and experience on the part of the software company is a point worth looking at—for then you can ask to see how their business programs are used and perhaps get the comments of the people actually using it.

Some help in the early stages via a **helpline** inspires both confidence in the user and demonstrates the software developer's faith in their product. This is usually a feature of expensive application software which is included in its cost.

M A P Computer Systems have developed a well put together program to deal with most of the accounting problems found in a **typical** small business. The program can be purchased either as an integrated package of four suites or, if the modular approach is preferable, the modules making up the system can be purchased separately.

The Invoicing and Sales Ledger enables you to keep track of sales to a particular customer and will send the information in a different form (posting) to the Nominal Ledger if the Nominal Ledger module is also used. The relevant information for each customer (Company address with contacts, Account references and codes, the allowed limit for credit and discounts if any, etc.) needs a disk capacity of 175K and up to 100 clients can be dealt with. As some space should be kept for other modules this could involve swopping disks to access other ledgers and the system takes this into account by helpful screen prompts. Sales Ledger controls enable you use your own headed stationery—the default values are set for plain paper—as a safeguard the sales ledger cannot be accesssed unless the **Period End** date is entered and this prevents postings being sent in error. The Sales Ledger is menu driven and flexible and will deal with part payments and different VAT rates and can total postings made in a session. Invoicing is included as standard.

The Purchase Ledger module is equally flexible in use and can be integrated with both the Nominal Ledger and the Stock Control system, like the Sales Ledger, accounting periods can be set and part payments and varying VAT rates are covered. Remittance advices are printed out and cheque printing is also available. As a precaution the **Cheque Print** option will not operate unless cash transactions have been posted, remittances outstanding are cleared and remittances printed. A good point is that if a number of cheques are to be printed out and the printer alignment is unsatisfactory to begin with the system will automatically cancel the spoilt cheques and record this on the audit.

Depending upon how many modules are in use the M A P system will automatically send postings to the Nominal Ledger with provision for manual entries for special transactions. Updating of the Nominal Ledger can be done on access from the Sales or Purchase Ledgers but if needed the update can be ignored leaving the postings already entered intact. This can be useful when setting out a new accounting period on another ledger. The Nominal Ledger main menu also offers the facility to print out Balance Sheets, Profit and Loss accounts and Trial Balances.

STOCK CONTROL MODULE

The Stock Control Module can be integrated with the M A P Sales Ledger or run as a **stand alone** unit which can be configured to run on different computers. The system deals with an item of stock when that item might have been bought in at different prices and will record the quantity at each price. Variations in selling price are also recorded. Stock coding and movement are dealt with in a flexible way so that damaged items and wastage—the bane of many a small business, can be accounted for.

The Stock File, which is the heart of the module, requires nine essential pieces of information before it will operate: stock description and code, unit of sale and sale code reference, VAT Code and product group (e g bin number), a code for the supplier and the unit of purchase and purchase code. Other information can be added and there are comprehensive report facilities to help you control stock movement.

Documentation for each M A P module is presented in an easy to understand way for the new computer owner, when purchased as an integrated package the documentation is supplied in a sturdy ring binder complete with index. Although this involves some **search techniques** it does give an overview of the system. Included with the complete package is a free after-sale help service for one month. This can be extended to one year at the cost of £50. Training courses can be arranged by M A P

The package represents a well thought out system which, used wisely, should help fill a need. Good working habits such as making frequent back-ups are essential and it is a good idea to discuss with your accountant your intention to use an integrated business system. Many accountants will give a sigh of relief when they see accounts presented like this—and if they are saving time, the client should be saving money.

When the Company Secretary of an International Organisation looked at the Integrated Accounting Program he remarked that he rather liked it 'but the software he was using at present would deal with more clients' that's true, but then. . . . he paid a few thousand pounds more for it.

The four modules which make up the system are:—Invoicing and Sales Ledger; Purchase Ledger; Nominal Ledger; and Stock Control.

For security, access to the files is protected by a password system.

The complete integrated package is available for £149 including V.A.T. Modules can be purchased separately at £49 each. An Amstrad Payroll program is also produced by M A P at £49. Further details from:-

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NOT MUCH LIFE IN THIS SPRITE

Our new technical editor, ANTHONY CLARKE, makes a detailed investigation of Setanta's Sprite Designer

Setanta Software have in the past given us some pretty useless software and the 'new' *Sprite Designer* is no exception. Once I had loaded the tape version after a frustrating hour I had a sense of deja-vu and readily used the package without even reading the instructions. This seemed a little strange at first but a quick jaunt around my magazine archives revealed that the *Sprite Designer* and program were straight from the November issue of a magazine. I assume **Setanta** had permission to do this.

That aside the package features a full sprite designer, various assorted scrolling commands, a FILL command and some fairly useless box, triangle and circle commands. It is not easy to start using the commands, as you must first load the Sprite Designer and then tell it to save the sprites which will also save the commands in a form that can be loaded directly, the sprites being saved along with the machine code, which sets up and executes the RSX's.

The FRAME command is used to make animation and scrolling smoother, but waiting for the FRAME FLYBACK which, simply put, is the time when the electron guns track back across the screen from the bottom right to the top left. Any screen operations taking place at this time will not be visible until the screen updates and so can stop the flickering that is associated with many sprite routines. The addition of this command is, however, not needed as calling &BD19 will have the same effect and take less time as the call command does not need to be looked up in an RSX table first.

SCROLLING TO LEFT

LSCROLL scrolls text lines to the left, wrapping the characters around the screen, ie, any characters going off the left hand side will be placed on the right hand side of the display. Instead of specifying a range of lines as with many scroll routines you must instead specify all the lines you wish to scroll, so if the whole screen is to be scrolled then you must perform the laborious process of typing 25 parameters. RSCROLL works in much the same way as LSCROLL but the scroll and wrap around are performed on the the right. USCROLL scrolls the whole screen up but has no provision for scrolling individual lines of text so using it to right some sort of *SPY HUNTER* game is impossible as any status line would be lost. DSCROLL scrolls the screen down and suffers from the same problem. If you wish only to scroll a 'WINDOW' of text one byte left or right the the WRAPL and WRAPR commands can be used.

The left and right columns must be specified along with the text row, unfortunately only one text line can be specified at a time so scrolling a window of more than one line will take more than one WRAPx command and therefore longer to perform. EXITR and EXITL take the same parameters as WRAPL and WRAPR but do not wrap the screen, instead any data scrolling off one side of the screen is lost.

The LARGE command allows the expansion of anything found on the text rows specified and so can be used to make any text or graphics double height, very useful for headings. The extended graphics commands include CIRCLE, TRIANGLE, BOX, FULLBOX and FILL commands. The CIRCLE command has the same syntax as the Spectrum's CIRCLE command with addition of a parameter specifying the colour of the circle.

The X and Y positions of the centre of the circle must be specified. BOX and FULLBOX both seem quite useless and are only included to fill out the package. Both require 5 parameter, the bottom left, top right corners followed by the pen to draw the box in, BOX draws only a skeleton frame where as FULLBOX floods the entire box with the specified ink. TRIANG draws a wire triangle and requires the position of all three points and the pen colour, experimentation showed a that the the points must be specified in the order lower left, lower right, upper point or the effect could be disasterous.

ONE USEFUL COMMAND

FILL is really the only useful command, and then only to a 464 owner, but tended to leave areas unfilled as it did not keep a note of areas that were missed as the fill command on the 664/6128 does. Now we come to real reason for the package, the sprite commands, of which there are only two, SPRITEON,x,y,n and SPRITEOFF,n, x and y specify the top left hand corner of the sprite and n the sprite number. The x and y parameters are not required in the SPRITEOFF command as these are remembered by the program.

The sprites do not destroy or XOR with the background but instead remove do a complete swop with the sprite in memory. This means that if your sprite has a large area unused within itself then this area shows up a large back area on the screen, it is my opinion that XOR's are a much better bet than the this primitive form of sprite command. To make things worse the sprites can only be used in mode 0, multicolour mode, and can only have a size of 16 by 16 pixels, so all sprites are twice as long as they are high, surely a system of multisized sprites could have been programmed in with little difficulty.

The *Sprite Designer* has only 6 commands. C clears the current designer grid, I sets a specified pen to a new ink or pair of inks, P selects a new pen, N selects a new / old sprite grid to be edited, G loads and saves sprite grids and S saves the sprites and commands to tape or disc. The G command does not save sprites in a usable form but as information about each cell in the grids to be saved.

Once again I think **Setanta** have wasted time and money on another turkey, my advise is to save your pennies and buy **Laser Basic**.

THE NOT SO UNIQUE MACHINE CODE MONITOR

ANTHONY CLARKE analyses a utility from SETANTA SOFTWARE and concludes it's not all it is claimed

The *Memory Boss* from Setanta promises to be a 'unique machine code monitor' but after the two minutes it takes to load you find very little in the way of options. In its way the program is very unique being the only machine code monitor that doesn't actually disassemble machine code, merely printing out the memory contents in HEX and ASCII form.

When loaded you are greeted with a menu of twelve commands, only eleven of which are usable on the 464 or 664 without a memory expansion, each option being selected by an almost logical key press.

Pressing **R** shows the entire contents of RAM starting at 0H and working its way through to BFFFH, pressing Enter at any time starts and stops the listing on the screen, giving an audible bleep each time. The display is made up in the standard fashion used by *Devpac* or the *RML 380Z*, having the memory locations listed on the far left, the contents of each location taking up the main part of the screen in the centre and finally an ASCII listing on the far right. The main problem that I encountered was getting back to the menu, a little key prodding showed that when the listing is stopped **M** takes you back to the menu.

L allows you to look at the lower ROM, from 0000H to BFFFH, although personally, I thought the lower ROM finished at 4000H. It is when you get to this stage that you realise that there is little point in looking through a ROM if you have to disassemble it by hand. I would prefer to write a small program to access the lower ROM and let *Devpac 80* earn its keep, though take it from me that there is little down there that is going to be of use to anyone. One interesting thing that did crop up was the number of companies that helped with the design, Amstrad and Arnold are obvious but what about Orion, AWA, Solavox, Saisho and ISP? As before stopping the listing and pressing **M** returns you to the menu.

H allows you to look at the BASIC Interpreter ROM in the same way as the lower ROM but this time there is more to whet the appetite. The first thing to note about Amstrad's ROM is how well documented it is, with remarks before each routine. It didn't take long to find and copy the random number formula for my own use. Also a quick glance at the keyword list reveals a few keywords that have not been implemented, RESET being one example.

ADDITIONAL ROMS

B allows you to look at any additional ROMS that you might have attached. You are first asked to enter a ROM number from zero to seven, this in itself is strange as the Amstrad can handle up to 240 background ROMS and although it is highly unlikely that anyone will

ever have 240 ROMS popping out the expansion port it would have been nice to be able to do it. If a particular ROM does not exist then you are greeted with the message NOT FOUND followed by nothing. You still have to select the menu option if you wish to do anything else.

The **X** command is only for 6128 owners and those 464/664 owners who have bought the DK'Tronics memory expansion packs. When selected you are asked to give the bank number to be displayed from 0 to 3. The contents of bank 1-4 are then shown, logical isn't it? I was quite disappointed that only banks 1-4 could be accessed as I have a 64K memory expansion on my 6128 for use as a RAM DISK. Having said that there is very little use in looking through the extra memory as you usually know what is there at all times except when it is being used to store screens, and who in their right mind would want to look at a screen? I don't quite know whether it was my 6128 acting up or someone pulling a fast one but when I loaded data into the banks all I could get at was the contents of the main memory, which was at the time my data base program.

The **I** command is for use in conjunction with the **R**, **L**, **H**, **B** and **X** commands and allows you to set the memory location to start when a listing is made. Each press increments the pointer by 256 bytes but there is no option to reduce it or to be more specific. To obtain a lower value you must go round the loop again, although if you hold down the key then this process is speeded up.

S allows you to save RAM to tape or disk. You are first asked for the output, tape or disk, then for the start and end addresses then finally for the file type, from BASIC to protected binary. It seems that every one nowadays is saving machine code in a protected binary form but I will tell you now that it doesn't work and never has. The save routine lacks the option to save the contents of a ROM and so finally makes this utility of very little use whatsoever. When you are prompted for the file name you must make sure that, if you are using disk, the filename is no longer than eight characters or the machine hangs up.

The **T** command loads a file into memory. First you must give the filename and then a four digit HEX address to load at, even if the location is only 1, 2 or 3 digits long so leading zeros must be inserted.

928
by
SETA
NTA

PROMPTED

W allows you to change an area of RAM except that in which the *Memory Boss* is situated. You are prompted for a four digit HEX address to start at and then a listing of the memory form that location onwards, is given. Pressing enter skips a byte and typing a two digit HEX number alters the location. Although the contents of memory are shown in ASCII at the far right there is no option to type ASCII characters directly into the machine. **P** turns the printer option on and off, the current state of which is shown at the top of the menu screen. In the manual it says you must be careful to ensure the printer is connected before you select an option that may send a printer output, if you don't then the program remains in an infinite loop! Adding a few bytes of code could have rectified this problem.

The most important key must be **Q** which returns you to BASIC; calling 35000 returns you to *Memory Boss*.

The comprehensive manual is a an eleven page work of something rhyming with ART, most of which is dedicated to warnings on the hazards of copyright infringement. Only four pages deal with the package itself but they are fairly clear. The final five pages consist of a HEX to DECIMAL converter and a list of all the Z80 opcodes, printed in just the right way so that they can be easily followed when you disassemble any code by hand.

Who this package is aimed at I don't know being little more than a few firmware calls and a loop. The cover says that it is 'A great aid for the beginner in machine code,' but as the program has very little to do with machine code I would not recommend it to a beginner, and as any competent programmer would know how to access the ROMS and look through memory then it is of little use to him/her either.

All I can say, without being brought up on charges, is there is no obvious use for this package as there are many better versions, with more features, which have been on the market for a long time.

ANOTHER TOOLKIT FOR YOUR AMSTRAD

Our Southern technical correspondent, PAUL SHERREARD, digs deep and unearths a new set of extension commands to aid your programming.

In the dark misty past before micros became as popular as they are today, I can remember reading through magazines and seeing adverts for 'Toolkits'. My first impression was that these were tiny toolboxes containing little brushes and screwdrivers, cassette head cleaners etc all for the purpose of caring for and cleaning your computer. It was only after reading the adverts and reviews, such as these, more closely that I realised how wrong I was (let's face it, we all started somewhere)!

Just released from **Setanta Software Ltd** is such a package — *Toolkit* — or, in other words, a set of extension commands to be used as a programmer's aid. In all, the machine code program will add 18 new commands to basic in the form of RSX's (Resident System extensions). These are the commands that are reached by using the 'bar' (:) command, that is the character above the '*' key.

Let's take the extra commands one at a time. First of all let's look at **:FRAME**. This is used for graphics' programming and waits for the frame flyback to occur before updating the screen. What this does, essentially, is to do away with any flicker or jerkiness of moving characters usually associated with graphics movement when written in basic. For those of you with a CPC6128, you will already have this command available as **:FRAME**.

Next let's look at **:LSCROLL**. This will scroll text to the left of the screen with wrap-around. In a similar manner **:RSCROLL** is the same as **:LSCROLL** only the text will scroll to the right of the screen. Next there is **:UNSCROLL** which scrolls the entire display up one screen line, but with no wrap-around. If the text passes the top of the screen display then the line is lost. The next command, **:DSCROLL** scrolls the display down one line and, as above, if it drops off the bottom of the display then the line is lost. Command **:WRAPL** wraps the text line defined by the user one byte to the left, that is it moves the text defined to the left by one character. Command **:WRAPR** is as above, but moves the text to the right.

The command **:EXITL** moves the text line off the screen to the left and not surprisingly the command **:EXITR** exits the text to the right of the screen. A nice command is **:LARGE** which expands the text to cover 2 lines so giving double height text which, with the inbuilt character set, gives a very good appearance to the screen display. **:CIRCLE** is self explanatory, in that a circle of any size and pen colour can be drawn with this command and in fact it is a very good circle (ie it's round). **:BOX** is just that: It draws a rectangle again in any pen number (mode permitting). **:FULLBOX** is similar to the last command, but is a solid filled with the specified pen colour.

Command **:TRIANG** draws a triangle; **:FILL** fills any enclosed area with a colour (screen mode permitting); **:SOUND** sounds a gong type sound in a choice of 3 levels. The last two extra commands are for printers enabling them to produce a shaded screen dump **:AMSTRAD** for the Amstrad printer (DMP1) and **:EPSON** does likewise for Epson compatible printers.

That's it, 18 new commands to add to the existing commands available in BASIC. They are very easy to use and if you do a lot of programming yourself this program could save you some time. However, as half of the extra commands are to do with text manipulation, and the others cover such basic things as boxes and triangles and 'beeps' etc then the actual programming scope is rather limited, perhaps to text adventures and educational basic programs etc.

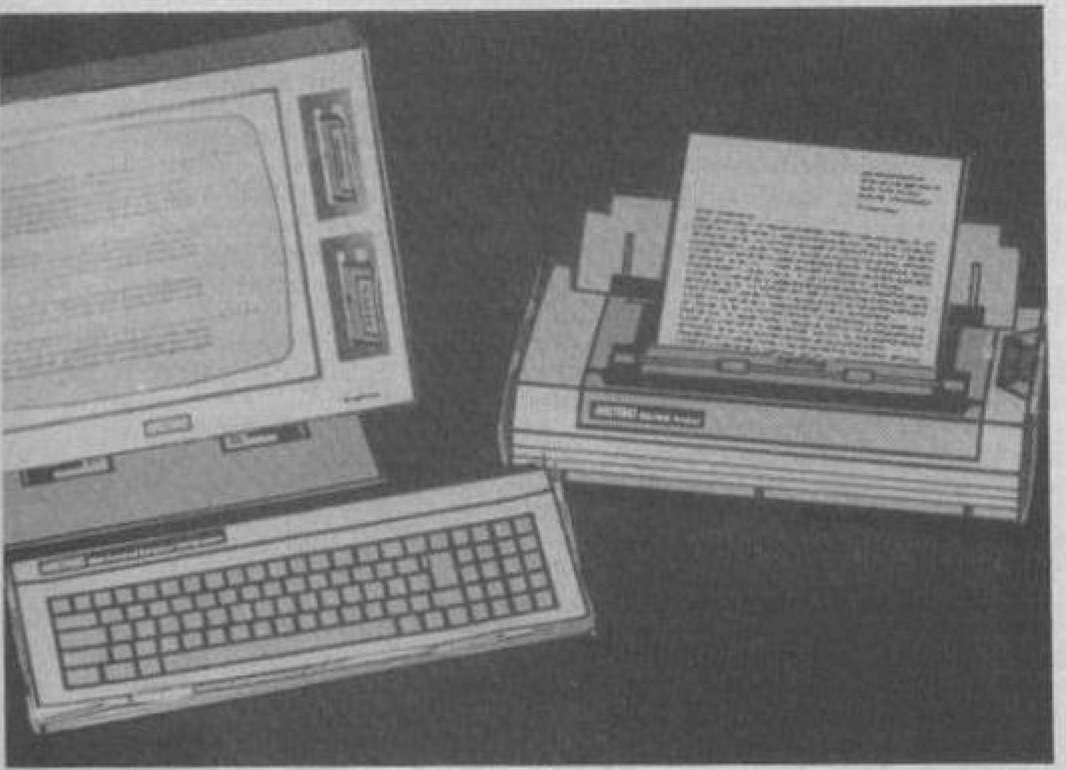
The cost of *Toolkit* is £9.95 for the cassette and £14.95 for the disk and £24.95 for the ROM version (this is an enhanced version with extra commands, but I can't comment on this as I haven't seen it yet). Included with this is an instruction booklet and, most useful, instructions on how to save the machine code part with your own program so it is even possible to re-load *Toolkit* under the control of your own program. A very good demo is also included on the tape which explains fully all the extra commands available and then leaves them in memory when it's finished, ready for you to carry on. All in all a good package but one that is limited really to text and basic graphics programming only, and is perhaps slightly on the expensive side. Although having said that, what it does, it does very well.

A TRIP TO THE JUNE PCW SHOW . . .

No, not the Personal Computer World Show which everyone knows is a September institution in the home micro world, but the fourth Amstrad Computer Show organised by Database. Despite rumours of bad luck — the show opened at the Novotel on Friday 13th — the only unlucky people were the arcade addicts who paid their admission fee to find a mere handful of games software houses exhibiting, and very little in the way of exciting product.

For the Joyce owner, however, the show was well worth visiting — a veritable cornucopia of PCW products was on offer from a range of companies offering goodies as varied as copyholders, dustcovers and graphics utilities; every possible serious application of the machine was catered for, from telecoms to training, from databases to megabyte drives with a bit of CAD/CAM thrown in for good measure.

Limitations on space this month prevent us from going into much detail on individual products — Malcolm's show report in the News section in this issue takes you on a whistle stop tour of the wares on offer. Next month, however, the Powers That Be have decided that we will have a real, meaty section of the magazine all to ourselves. We have been promised at least a dozen pages by way of Joyce Supplement, so look out for the September issue of AMTIX! — essential reading for all Joyce owners and would-be owners. Meanwhile, on with this month's column . . .



Easy to assemble, scissors, glue and nimble fingers is all that's required. Mr Poel wittily brings microcomputing within everyone's budget range . . .

A VIRTUAL COMPUTER . . . OR VIRTUALLY A COMPUTER?

NewStar supremo, **Bill Poel**, carefully leaked rumours that his company would be unveiling a new PCW compatible computer at the Amstrad Show, and gentle references to this astounding launch made it into print in one or two publications.

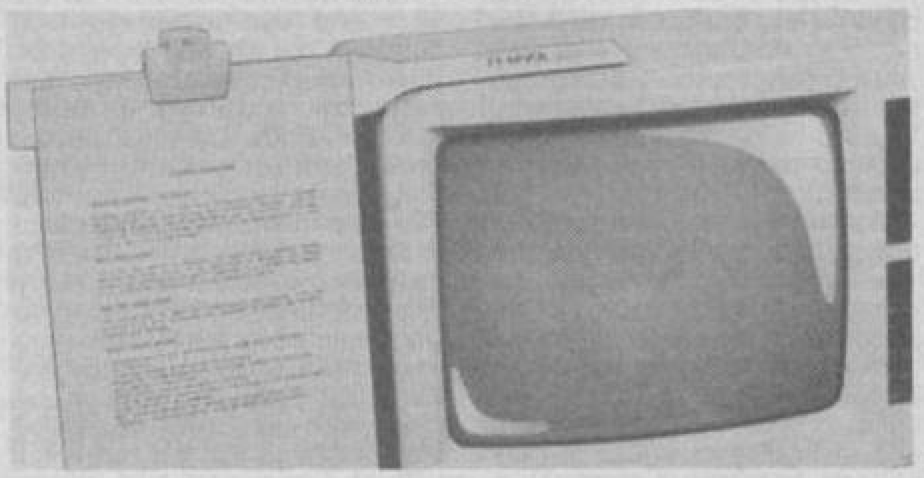
Friday 13th was a portentious day indeed for NewStar Software — for there, in the middle of a complex of stands, was the new machine for all to see. Following the example set by Clive Sinclair in the early day of home computing, Poel decided to market his machine in kit form — and entered the market with a very competitive pricing policy, although in the performance stakes it loses out to virtually every machine previously launched into the home market..

The new computer is easy to assemble, requiring no technical knowledge and little more than the level of manual dexterity possessed by the average Blue Peter viewer. Even Cameron, our pet photography person found it a doddle to assemble.

For the launch was indeed a jolly jape, perpetrated by Mr Poel in collusion with the fellows at **MMM**, serious software authors. The asking price was pitched at a polite request level, and visitors to the show with minimal communication skills were able to acquire their very own kit.

AMTIX! is currently negotiating a marketing and distribution deal for the new machine with Mr Poel, and we should be able to bring further details to all you scissor, cardboard and glue freaks next month. . . .

ELLO JOHN! GOT A THINGI?



Get a THINGI to hang from your Joyce.

The cunning fellows at **Overbase Ltd** have come up with a cheap and cheerful solution to the copyholding problem. Copyholding problem? Well how do you prop that magazine, book or draft letter up so you can key text into your computer? Don't laugh, until we persuaded our contributors to supply their copy already on disk, the battle for the swinging lectern could be fierce!

Once upon a time, and until quite recently, home-made Fred Karno clothespegs and washing line contraptions were all that was available at the budget end of the market, with 'professional' copyholders costing around £20 or £30. Now, for less than a tenner, you can get a **Thingi** which is attached to the top of a monitor with a self adhesive Velcro strip and is capable of supporting quite heavy documents. A neat little product all round — watch out for further details next month. . . .

DASTARDLY DATABASE

Minerva, producers of a well respected database for the CPC range of computers, are putting the final touches to *First Database* — a very sensible approach to introducing databases to first-time users. It's all very well lashing out hundreds of pounds on a whizzo, all-singing all-dancing database package which you feel has so many facilities that it's bound to be able to cope with your needs, but what if it doesn't? An expensive way of experimenting with database software . . .

Minerva reckon that the best way to get into databases is via their *First Database* software, which should be complete by 21st July - probably just missing a full review next issue. Minerva plan to sell their introductory database for £29.95 — not a major investment in itself — and the idea is that first-time database users can discover the sort of things databases can do for them.

The *First Database* is quite a powerful piece of software, according to its specifications, and many people will find that it serves their needs adequately. Novice users will be able to key their data into the system and obtain serious results from it — while identifying their database needs. It may well be that the *First Database* proves capable of storing and accessing your data, but if it's upgrade time then at least the files you have already created should be compatible with more expensive suites of software. When it comes to choosing which upgrade path to follow, experience gained with *First Database* should enable you to avoid expensive mistakes . . .

JOYCE JOYSTICKS JUST AROUND THE CORNER

By the end of July, **Cascade** should have a joystick interface on the market which connects to the expansion slot of the PCW machines and allows any joystick with a standard D type connector to be plugged into your machine.

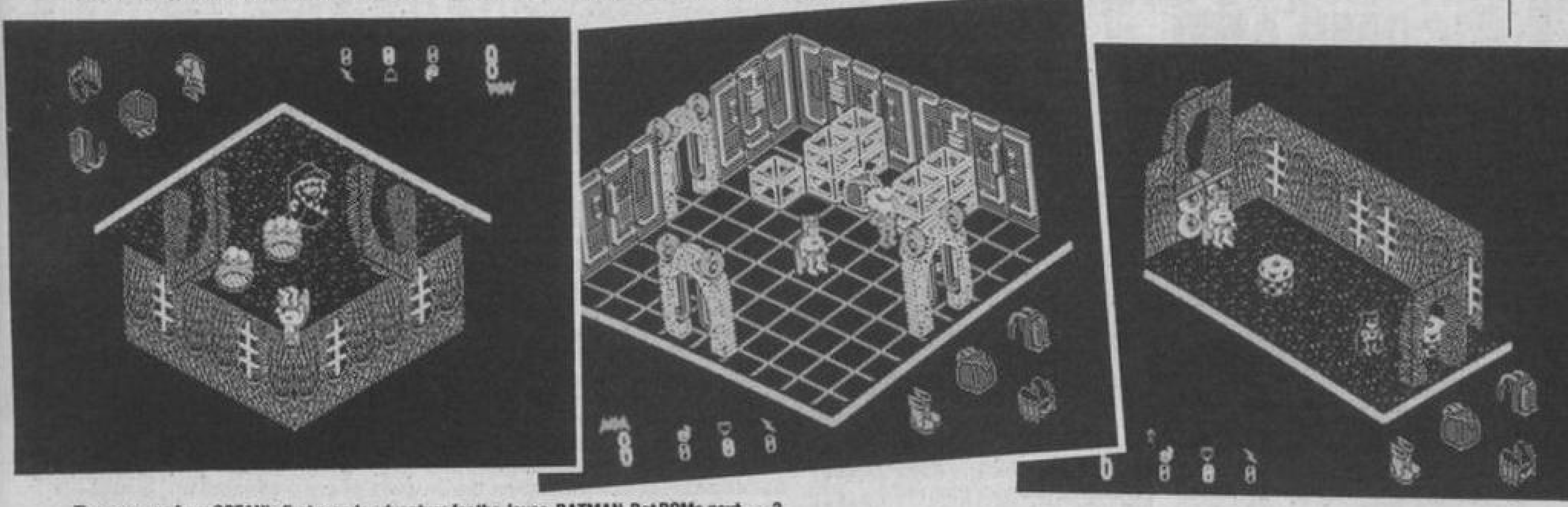
Details are a little hazy at the time of writing, but Cascade plan to sell the interface on its own for a sum not unadjacent to £25 and may well bundle it with a couple of games and a joystick for the Christmas market. Full technical specs are currently being circulated to software houses and several companies have already expressed a firm interest in producing games which are compatible with the Cascade standard.

Further details, as and when they become available.

PROBLEMS WITH THE KEYBOARD?

Iankey and Caxton Software both publish well-established typing tutor programs, and now Computer One have entered the market with a keyboard familiarisation program that includes a Hangman type game to encourage the learning process. With luck and a following wind we should be able to stage a Battle of The Typing Tutors next issue . . . if keyboard skills are not included in your repertoire, hang on in there before spending your money!

OCEAN WIN TWO BAT-ACCOLADES IN A ROW



Three screens from OCEAN's first arcade adventure for the Joyce, BATMAN. Bat ROMs next . . . ?

All work and no play makes Joyce a dull girl. Or so the argument goes when it's time to take a break from slaving over a hot green screen, processing words. Quite a few companies have realised the immense potential of providing entertainment software for the Amstrad PCW machines, but until now text-based adventures or a bit of on-screen chess is all that has been available on the fun front.

The race to produce an all-action, singing and dancing arcade game on the Joyce has been won by **Ocean**: freelance programmers **John Ritman** (code) and **Bernie Drummond** (graphics), who were responsible for the 3D arcade adventure *Batman* on the mainstream games machines, have solved the problems involved in tickling Joyce into a bit of fantasy.

A review of the CPC version of *Batman* appeared in the June issue, collecting an Accolade on the way — check it out for details of the full-colour gameplay. . . . The PCW Batgame is a very faithful conversion of the original — everything's there except the colour. Somehow, the game seems to play that bit faster, too . . .

The Bat-tune rollicks its way out of the Joyce squeaker as you begin play, and the full keyboard definition menu system found in the first version of the game allows you to set up the control keys to the most comfortable configuration. Keyboard play is very responsive, the graphics are detailed, neatly animated and amusing. Overall, a stunning game which marks a new stage of development in Joyce software. Well worth the asking price of £14.95.

As soon as the game arrived in AMTIX! Towers it was passed from hand to hand, loaded into every Joyce in the office (we now have eight) and judged to be an ACCOLADE almost instantaneously. The reviewing team is already clamouring for BatROMs to plug into the back of their workstations . . .

DOUBLER

DOUBLER+
Will solve ALL your problems

HAVING PROBLEMS BACKING UP THE LATEST LOADING TECHNIQUES?

After **enormous success** on the CBM 64 and Spectrum we now have "Doubler" available for the CPC464. Designed by DRAYSOFT, inventors of the **infamous** "Interface III", this superb unit will operate with **100% success guaranteed**. It requires the use of an auxiliary cassette deck.

Simply plug in the "Doubler" on the expansion port, connect a tape player to it with the lead supplied, LOAD the software supplied in the normal way and you are **ready to start**.

Using digital techniques "Doubler" will create a brand new machine back up of **ALL** software. **100% success GUARANTEED**.

As a bonus **"Speedcop" is included** in the package. This is a superb conventional back up copier that will handle **all normal AMSTRAD loaders**. It has all the usual options like choice of save speed deprotect basic etc.

Solve all your back up problems in one move, remember we guarantee success.

ONLY £16.95

Evesham Micros
THE UTILITY SPECIALISTS

3" DISCS
Usually Available
@ £39.00 for 10
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DISCMASTER V1.0

At last a **POWERFUL disc backup and utility** package for the 464/664/6128 series. Incorporates the following:

"DUPLICATOR" . . . A new standard of protected disc backup for the Amstrad. A **very powerful** program that will operate with one **or two** drives. We aren't saying that it will copy every disc available but our extensive tests have been **unable to find one that it won't**. We are sure that the DUPLICATOR is the **best disc backup program available**. Make no mistake many similar utilities are very limited. Future updates will be available as and when necessary at nominal cost.

"MENU MAKER" . . . A tremendously useful utility that allows you to make a menu on all your own discs **completely automatically**. You select which files are to be included on the finished menu and all the rest is done for you.

"RECOVER" . . . This program allows you to recover any files that may accidentally be erased from a disc. Very useful in case of accident.

"EXTENDED CATALOGUE" . . . Gives an extended CAT that includes the start address and length in bytes of both BASIC and machine code files.

ONLY £19.95

WARNING: Do not be misled by other adverts. There is only one "DUPLICATOR", it is the most powerful program of its type.

Disc Wizard

TAPE TO DISC MADE SIMPLE

At last, a hardware "device" that will allow you to transfer those tediously slow loading cassettes to disc. "Disc Wizard" operates on the working memory of the computer, hence it is unaffected by the loading method used. It is brought into operation by the **simple press of a button.** A working version of the program in memory is then saved to disc and the program will restart. The saved version, when reloaded, will start from **exactly the point that the button was pressed (very useful).** In most cases the process is then complete. With some programs it will be necessary to make one or two adjustments to the saved programs using a Simple routine supplied. However, this will also allow you to make certain custom alterations to the programs, e.g. screen size, windows, etc.

"Disc Wizard" is a hardware interface that fits the expansion or floppy disc port of the **464/664/6128.** It is equipped with a through port and is supplied complete with simple instructions. **At the time of going to press we have been unable to find even one, memory resident, program that the "Wizard" has been unable to handle.**

ONLY £39.95

Please Note: This product is intended for archival purposes only. Programs transferred require the unit to be present for reloading. Software to enable saved versions to stand alone will be available in the future.

SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY. ALL ORDERS DESPATCHED THE WORKING DAY AFTER RECEIPT

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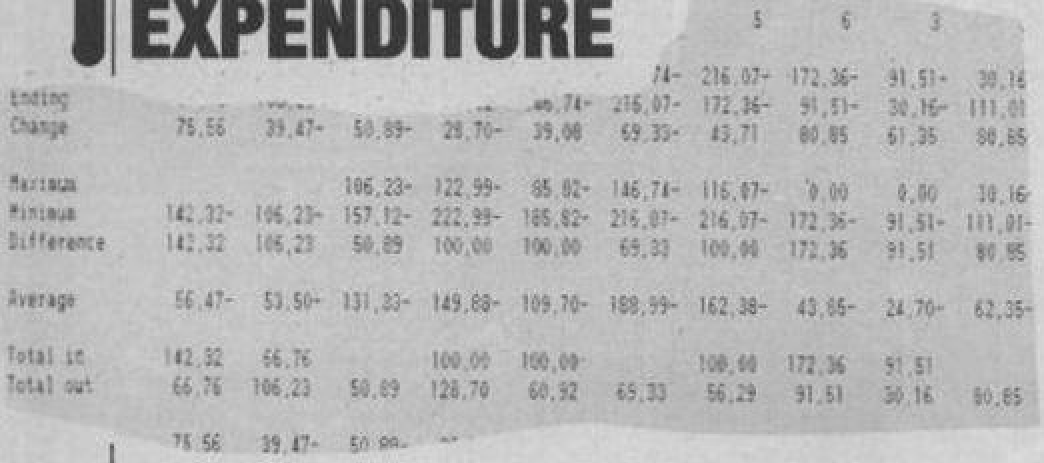
GETTING TO GRIPS WITH INCOME AND EXPENDITURE



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                                                          5        6        3
                                            74-   216.07-  172.36-   91.51-   30.16
Ending                                   .46.74-  216.07-  172.36-   91.51-   30.16-  111.01
Change       75.56    39.47-   50.89-   28.70-    39.08    69.33-   43.71    80.85    61.35    80.65

Maximum                       106.23-  122.99-   85.82-  146.74-  116.07-    0.00     0.00    30.16
Minimum     142.32-  106.23-  157.12-  222.99-  185.82-  216.07-  216.07-  172.36-   91.51-  111.01-
Difference  142.32   106.23    50.89   100.00   100.00    69.33   100.00   172.36    91.51    80.85

Average      56.47-   53.50-  131.33-  149.88-  109.70-  188.99-  162.38-   43.65-   24.70-   62.35-

Total in    142.32    66.76            100.00   100.00-           100.00   172.36    91.51
Total out    66.76   106.23    50.89   128.70    60.92    65.33    56.29    91.51    30.16    80.65

             75.56    39.47-   50.89-
```

Are you the sort of person who keeps cheque stubs and receipts in a large cardboard box in a dark corner of the house? Regularly pestered by Hate Mail from the Bank Manager, Taxman and other financial institutions? Tired of being intimidated by bills, payments and faceless beaurocrats? *Money Manager* could well be the program for you!

Connect System's completed *Money Manager* a little over a year ago, when the tape-based software received good reviews for the CPC computers. The advent of the PCW computers has prompted **Connect** to modify their software — a VAT analysis facility has been added to the latest version, which is now available in one package for all the non-Sinclair Amstrad machines. Two sample data files are included with the program files on the master disk, which snuggles up to a 24 page manual inside a videotape sized box.

Money Manager does not aim to provide the facilities offered by an integrated suite of accounts programs, and is not intended to cope with the demands of a large business which has to cope with the formal accounting required to deal with stock, payroll, bank reconciliation and so on. It is more akin to a financial database, which can be set up by the user according to needs and used to analyse financial information and present reports, which may then be used in the preparation of formal accounts.

Limitations on the number of entries per month (a maximum of 100), on the number of accounts (9) and the number of class codes, or headings for analysis (50) mean that the software is well suited to personal financial management or project planning, but would only be useful in a comparitively small enterprise. Some compromises on the level of detail included in individual entries will almost certainly have to be made if the maximum number of entries is to be used.

Naturally, there is no limit to the number of data files which may be opened — although only one can be addressed at any one time — so with some forward planning a hierarchical system could be defined under which areas of activity are detailed in sub-files, and the month totals transferred to another file which is used to consolidate a broader picture.

MODUS OPERANDI

The program is menu driven, and once the working disk has been booted up it's time to load in a datafile that has already been created and saved to disk, or open a new file into which records may be entered. Files are organised into Accounts, which are numbered from one to the maximum nine, and Class Codes — you can have up to fifty class codes under which entries may be analysed and consolidated. Class Codes are prefixed by a letter and identified by a number, so H0 Household Expenses might be split into H1 Rates, H2 Mortgage, H3 Insurance and so on. Grouping classes under a zero class heading allows analysis for an area of expenditure later on. Designing the structure for your file(s) is a vitally important part of using *Money Manager.*

If a new file is being set up, it is possible to start from scratch, or, to save time and effort, the Account and Class Codes may be copied from an existing file. Once a file has been set up, accessing the codes menu from the main menu allows the title of the current file, the account codes and class codes it contains to be edited — but care needs to be exercised if records have already been entered. It's not a good idea to delete or amend class codes without thinking about it, for records may 'disappear' from the system and cause major grief later on when it comes to making everything tally.

Financial records are maintained on a month-by-month basis, and the system allows twelve months to be kept on record with a thirteenth month, month zero, used to hold details of standing orders which are then copied into the appropriate month by the user as they fall due.

When a suitable file definition has been set up, records of financial transactions can be input into the data area for a given month. Each record consists of the date, the account number to be debited or credited as a result of the transaction, an optional reference, the class code, an optional description, an optional mark, the amount and the VAT content of the transaction.

OPTIONAL ACCESSORIES

The option fields allow greater detail to be entered for each transaction at the expense of memory, and ultimately, the quantity of 'additional' information you input with records limits the number of records that can be crammed into a single month or into a single file. Up to six characters may be input to the reference field, to identify cheque or invoice numbers for instance, while up to eighteen characters may be used to describe the transaction: 'Payment for review' maybe? A single letter Mark is also optional, and could be useful when analysing a joint account for instance, if 'h' was used to identify the husband's transactions and 'w' used as the mark for the wife's dealings. Records with, or without, specified marks may be analysed separately later on.

VAT may be dealt with using a marker to indicate that VAT is due on the entire transaction amount (at the rate prevailing, which may be edited), or another marker to indicate that the entire amount is exempt or zero rated. Alternatively, the VAT element of a transaction, which may be a compound of several items, can be entered directly into the VAT field. If your enterprise is VAT registered, the dreaded quarterly returns are not actually filled in for you by the program — rather, a VAT analysis for each of the three months in a quarter has to be collated manually before the dreaded Quarterly Return Form can be completed and posted off to Customs and Excise.

ANALYSING THE INPUT

At any stage it is possible to conduct a detailed analysis of all the record data input, or of subsets of the data by Class, Account, Marker. Summary statements for Accounts or months may be generated and full year Account balance statistics can be drawn off. Tables showing the totals in each Class Code for each month of the year can be created, and information may be sent to the printer in tabulated form or can be represented as a Bar Graph is you so wish.

The range of options available during the analysis phase should be sufficient to cope with most presentations you may have to make to Bank Managers, VAT Inspectors or men from the Revenue, and should prove more than adequate when it comes to keeping track of expenditure and making forecasts.

GETTING TO GRIPS

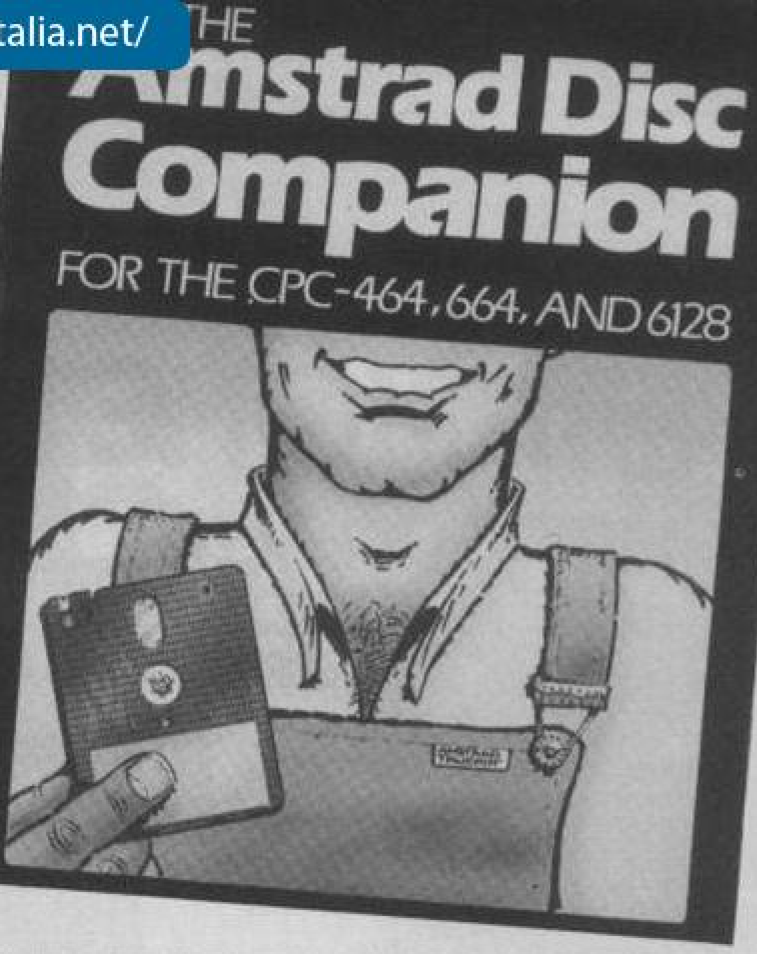
Starting straight in, the manual is a little bit of a let-down — the instructions for preparing a working disk are straightforward enough, but thereafter the ordering of information and the level of detail available falls short of ideal, and you are left to find out the full potential of the package for yourself.

After a brief introduction to the kind of thing you may wish to bear in mind when setting up the software to manage your money, the user is advised to load in one of the sample data files and romp around the menu driven options, experimenting with the facilities. It would have been helpful to the new user embarking on this voyage of self-discovery to have had some form of map. The two sample files are presented totally cold: while reading sections of the manual and experimenting with the commands does lead to familiarity with the way the program works, when it comes to designing your own record structure, the manual advises that you think carefully and avoid rushing into things. It is up to you to examine the sample data files to see how they have been set up, and it's up to you work out how the reports that can be obtained depend on the set up. A little more written explanation would have gone down well.

Fortunately, full telephone support is offered with this product which is a laudable step. If, like me, you cannot understand why the bar chart generation section of the program will not produce anything intelligible, no matter how the parameters are altered — either an empty graph, or a graphic representation of twelve equal monthly positions was all I could coax out of the software — then help is a telephone call away. Silly boy! When the program requested an account number, for some reason I was entering '03' rather than '3', which rather threw the software. A quick telephone call to **Connect Systems** solved the problem, and I was away. A very fair service, given the cost of the package.

For £29.95, *Money Manager* represents an excellent introduction to implementing financial management on the computer, and would be a wise buy for anyone contemplating computerising their financial affairs for the first time. Once the nature of your particular financial problems has been explored within the constraints of *Money Manager,* upgrading can be contemplated from an informed perspective.

IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE
JOYCE'S CHOICE
A special supplement to cover the astonishing growth of products for this most successful of machines, whose sales are outstripping others.
We'll be looking at program generators ◆ add-on drives ◆ wordprocessing ◆ stock control ◆ databases ◆ labelling ◆ accounts packages ◆ communications ◆ desk top publishing . . .
And on top of that, for the serious user who wants to relax now and again, a whole range of Joyce games are on their way . . .
Don't miss it, put your order in for September's AMTIX! with your newsagent NOW! It's



THE AMSTRAD DISC COMPANION

By Simon Williams, price £7.95, Sigma

When you decide to take the plunge and add a disk drive to your CPC464 or indeed buy a CPC6128 which has the integral disk drive unit, you will no doubt have many questions about the use of disks. This book sets out to answer these, and also to describe the many advantages of disk storage over cassette.

The book shows you how to use disks with your Amstrad and later chapters outline some of the many application programs which are particularly suited to a computer with a disk drive. These sections of the book concentrate on small business uses of Amstrads and the use of languages other than **BASIC**. Disks are most suited to business as they offer the facility to store a large amount of information and to transfer it very quickly to and from the computer. There are two main ways to obtain programs to user with your Amstrad disk. The first is to buy a ready-made program to do the job. The book looks at several examples of some of the best software currently available.

The second way is to write your own program. If you have only used the programming language **BASIC** until now then you will be interested to know that adding a disk drive to a computer gives you the option of several alternative languages which may be better suited to certain jobs. Indeed a second language, **LOGO** is supplied with the DD1-1 disk drive and with both the 664 and 6128 micros. This language was originally designed to help in the teaching of mathematics and logical thinking but has also found many uses in Artificial Intelligence.

Another language which is particularly well suited to use with disk is **Pascal**. A version of this language is available for the Amstrad micro and its particular advantages are also looked at in detail in this book.

To show that writing your own software is not as daunting a task as you might at first think, the book rounds off with the listing of a ready made application program which you can type into your Amstrad and use with your disk drive.

The Amstrad Disc Companion should provide the reader with an understanding of the following in varying degrees of detail: how a disk and disk drive work; **AMSDOS** and **CP/M** and how to use them; a machine code assembler and monitor; **LOGO** and **PASCAL**; a word processor, database and spreadsheet; how to write an application program using disk files.

By introducing the CPC6128, with its more sophisticated **CP/M PLUS** operating system and extra 64K memory, Amstrad has added a worthy machine to the market. To fully cover the extended facilities of this machine, each chapter of the book includes a '6128 special' section, which describes the additional features of the machine and the differences in the way the new **CP/M** works. The earlier sections of each chapter are also applicable to the 6128, however, as the **CP/M 2.2** operating system is supplied by Amstrad, to ensure compatibility with software written for the 464 and 664 micros.

There is no doubt the Amstrad CPC machines offer a high quality, low cost entry into computing, and with the addition of one or even two disk drives, they may be used in many business and educational applications. This book is essential reading for al those who want to get the most out of their disk drive and their Amstrad.

Malcolm Harding

UNDERSTANDING AND EXPANDING YOUR AMSTRAD CPC-464/664/6128

By Alan Trevenor, price £8.95, Sigma

This book aims to help the reader expand the hardware of his Amstrad by giving details of eleven projects. These range from making one's own **RS232** serial interface, to an **EPROM** programmer, and the basis of a CPC network. The book gives all the information needed, although *Amsoft*'s **Filmware Guide** may be useful if the reader wishes to alter some of the projects. As the level of knowledge required is quite high, half the book is not concerned with the projects themselves but with generally useful information, such as a complete list of Z80 machine code mnemonics. This is accompanied by a chapter dealing with the differences between **BASIC** and assembler, and how to use machine code in conjunction with **BASIC**. There are also chapters on the different chips inside an Amstrad, and on the Firmware.

There are seven appendices including one aimed at someone completely new to computers and this is a good introduction for the novice. This book is a must for those who want to get out a soldering iron, buy a few parts, and stick everything together to make something which can be bought in the shops for five times as much. Certainly **ROM** boards, **RS232** interfaces and **EPROM** blowers are all available commercially, but not the facility for adding a second keyboard, or for making the Amstrad into a burglar alarm. The Z80 was originally designed to be able to control a large number of dumb devices, and as the author says, one could use it to monitor the signals and junctions of a model railway! Full circuit diagrams are provided, along with a detailed guide to the chips used in the projects. Terms such as **DIL** (Dual In Line) and **TTL** (Transistor-Transistor Logic) are explained in full, and Mr Trevenor's continuous supply of terrible jokes and comments make the book very easy to read.

Complicated subjects are dealt with clearly and simply, but without leaving out important details. One diagram appears to have been damaged on the way to the printers, but in general they are very good. Complete listings of the various programs are given, and printed circuit boards and kits are available, to save some of the work. Throughout the book, the emphasis is not only on particular pieces of hardware, but also on the techniques of good programming and good hardware design, so that other projects, totally unrelated to those in the book, will still be made easier by having read this work. If you want to learn more about the hardware of the Amstrad, and some of the considerations of accessory manufacturing, or if you want your own speech synthesiser, then this is the book for you.

Michael Jampel

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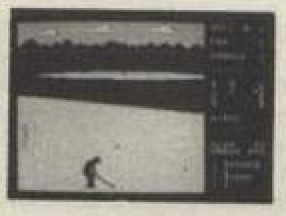

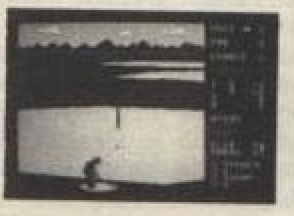

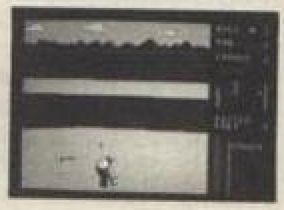

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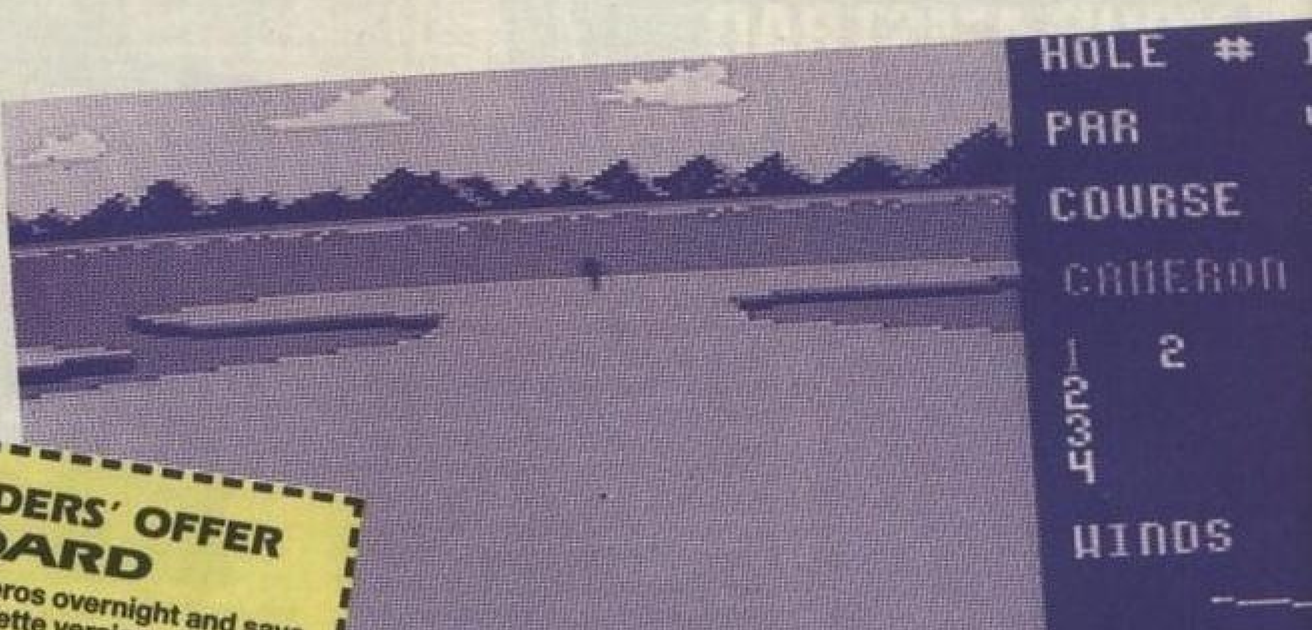
The feel you get from a shot, judging the degree of arm swing needed to send the ball on its way, and then watching its flight through the air and its shadow on the fairway, makes this not only a game of skill but also of excitement . . . a great game for everyone. **—PS**

I was more than pleasantly surprised by Leader Board, in fact I was amazed. It's not just a golf simulation on a computer — it IS golf on a computer . . . Leader Board is without doubt the sports simulation of the year, if not the decade! **—GP**

Graphically the game is superb — the animation on the golfer is stunning with incredible realism. The sound is great too, no music but amazingly accurate spot FX. Even if you don't like golf look at this sports simulation of the year, you'll be amazed. **—JR**



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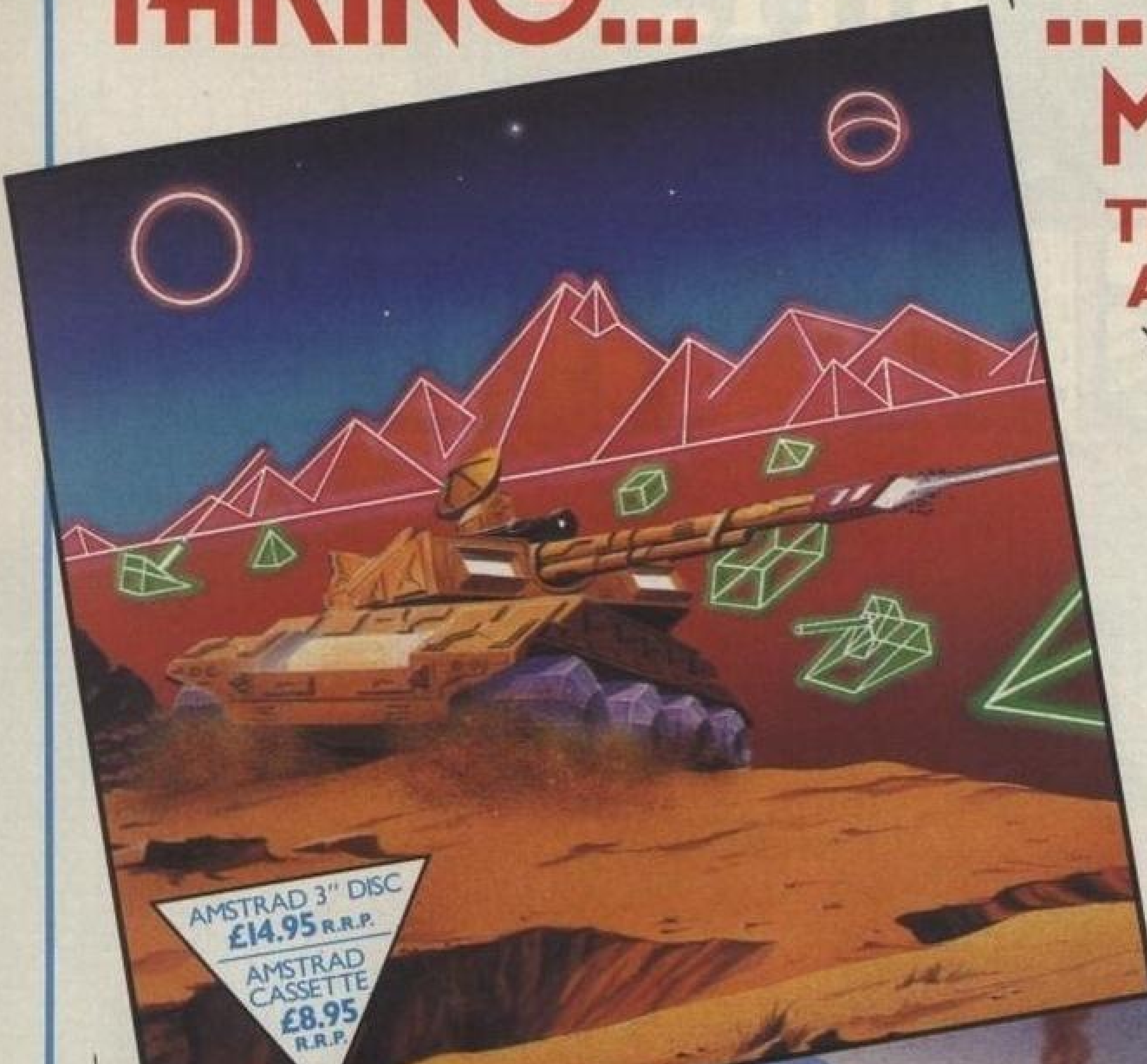
DESIGN

DESIGN

TAKING... ...TIGER MOUNTAIN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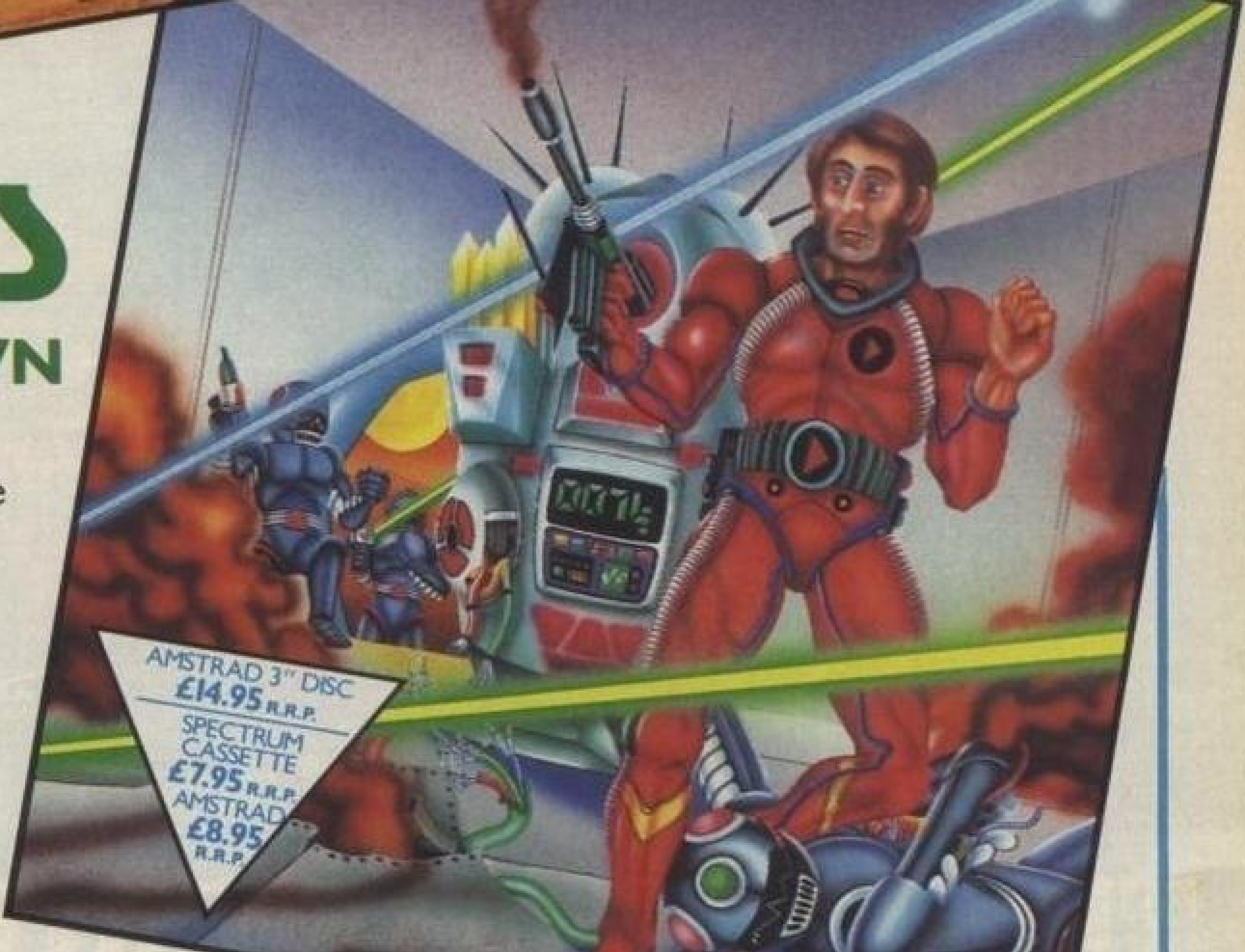
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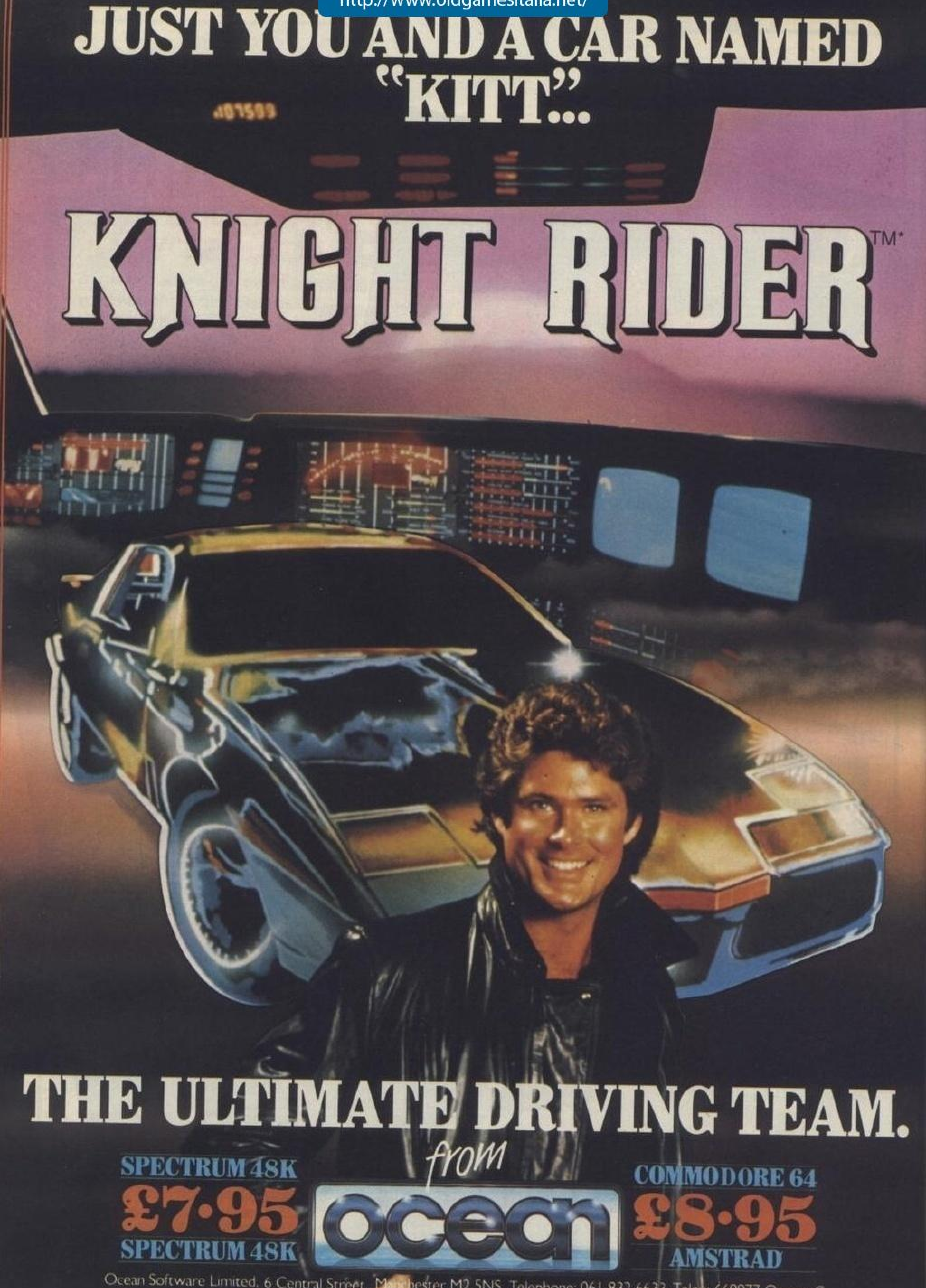
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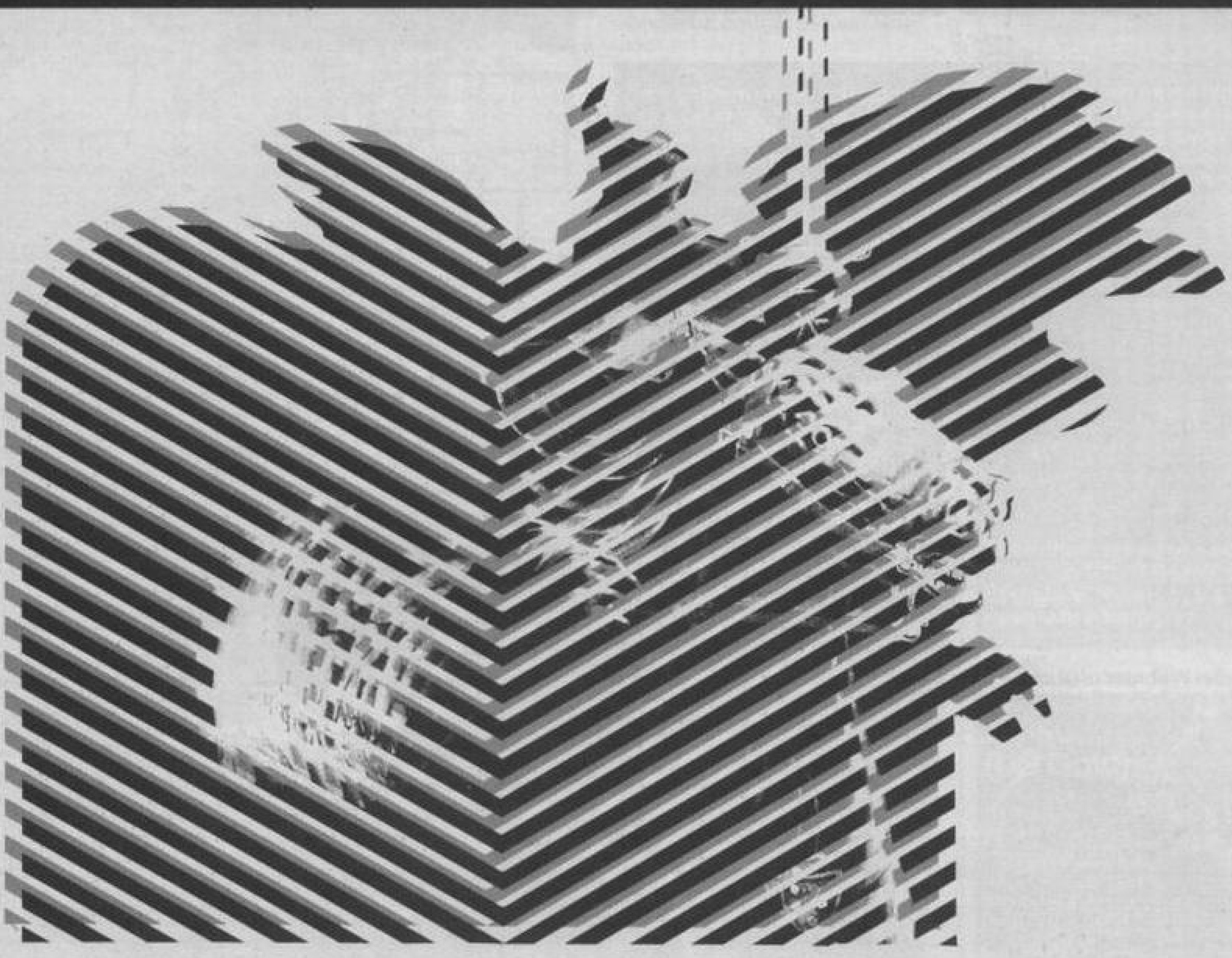


Whizzo Hologram up for grabs!

20 copies of THE HOBBIT and 25 copies of LORDS OF THE RINGS for runners up

I suppose AMTIX! reviewers could be related to Hobbits — or at least be the result of a strange mutant strain of Hobbit genes. Yes . . . It sort of fits. Hobbits have furry feet, and AMTIX! reviewers have furry tongues on account of late nights at the Dog and Ferret quaffing tankards of Old Flatulence Bitter and nibbling Cheesy Wotsits.

Hobbits live in burrows in the ground, while AMTIX! reviewers seem to exist in pits — sort of underground chambers — sharing their humble abodes with all manner of creepy, crawly slimy things that make you go Ugh! when you tread on them.

And by anyone's standards, both Hobbits and AMTIX! reviewers wear very strange clothes indeed . . .

But there the similarity ends. Hobbits are peaceable, friendly creatures. AMTIX! reviewers are quite the opposite: noisy, loathsome, belligerent (especially after the odd pint of Old F) and generally not very nice to know. Especially if you happen to be a Competition Minion, forced to tramp around the office in persuance of your daily tasks.

There's Lee Paddon, the new Software Editor — a real Ringwraith if ever I saw one, drawing on the power of his Pet Black Hole to suck in any stray important documents and generally doing his best to thwart your faithful Minion when it comes to successfully processing lists of winners' names and addresses.

Balrog wise, Jazzababes 'Mateyboots' Rignall is one mean sorcerer when it comes to casting ego around the shop. Half the time it's impossible to walk across the office floor without tripping over a stray chunk of ego, hurled along with a host of abusive invective in the general direction of someone who claimed to have scored a point or two more than Mr R at the latest game.

Gollum Masterson normally manages to place himself strategically in the way, whining and moaning for another sarnie from the shop or proferring a ciggie in a rather ingratiating manner before sinking his teeth into the nearest piece of human flesh. Yeaowch!

Are you brave, oh AMTIX! readers? Could you draw these foul reviewer characters that inhabit the region of Muddle Earth in which they live and 'work'? You could?

Well, Melbourne House are having a Tolkien Bonanza Month this month, and to celebrate they're offering a limited edition Hologram of the head of a Rider of Nazgul created by Holografix as first prize in this competition. They'll be throwing in a 1987 Tolkien Calendar and a set of books as well as THE HOBBIT and LORD OF THE RINGS adventure games. Melbourne have repackaged their hit game, THE HOBBIT, without the book this time, and are selling it for a few pounds less than the oid price. No less than 25 lucky AMTIX! artists will receive consolation copies of the two games for the pains they have had to endure during the rendition of these evil likenesses.

Whizz those drawings of The Horrid Ones, to **AMTIX! REVIEWER PORTRAITS, AMTIX! TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB** and make sure they arrive by 14th August.

AMTIPS

Julian Rignall

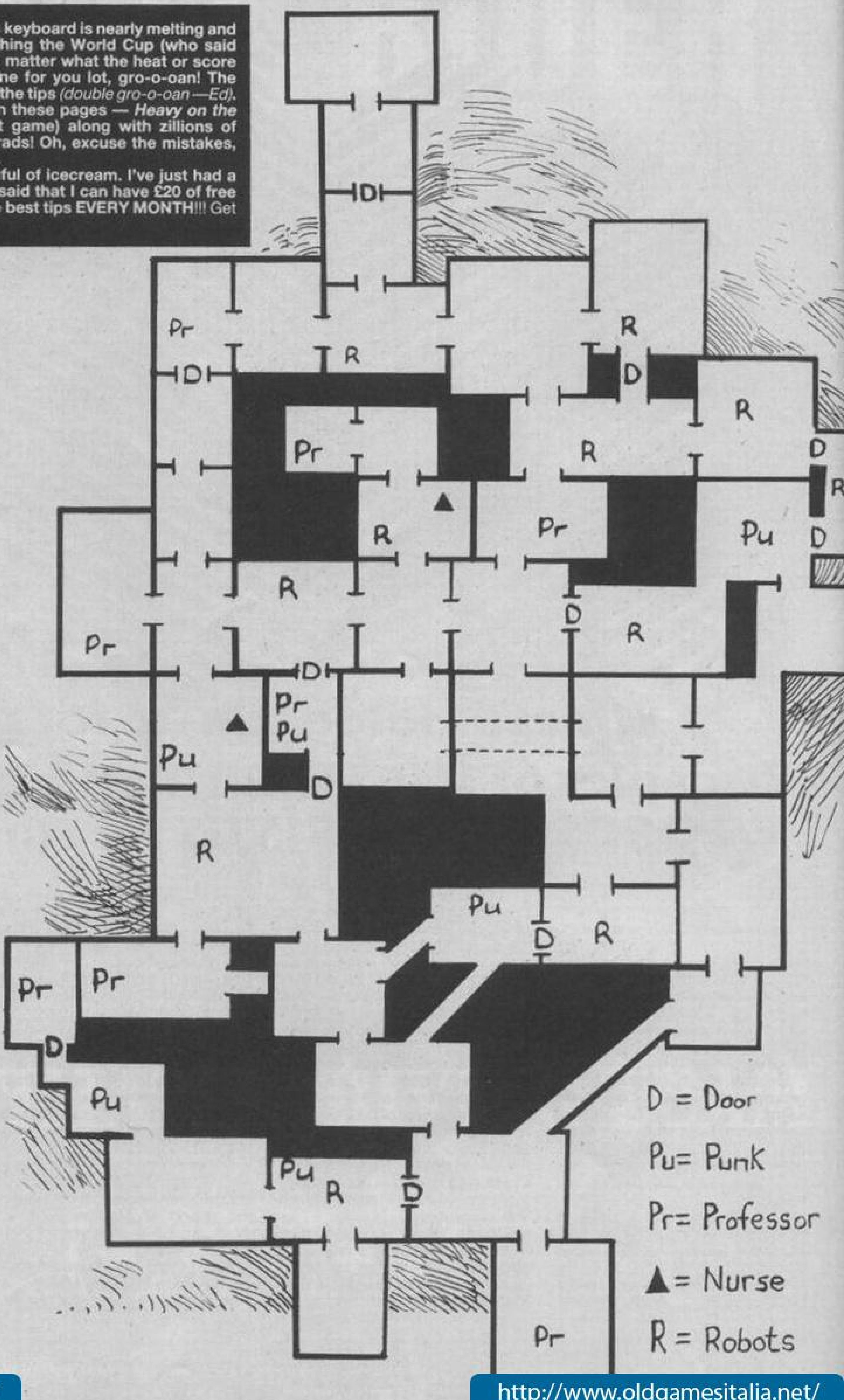
Aggghhh! It's so flippin' hot my 8256 keyboard is nearly melting and I'm knackered 'cos I've been watching the World Cup (who said cheats never prosper?). Oh well, no matter what the heat or score I've still got to get the AMTIPS done for you lot, gro-o-oan! The weather may be hot, but then so are the tips *(double gro-o-oan —Ed)*. Right, some jolly tips abound within these pages — *Heavy on the Magick* map and solution (brilliant game) along with zillions of POKES and stuff. Feast your Amstrads! Oh, excuse the mistakes, I've got a King Cone in my mouth . . .

'Wahay' he said through a mouthful of icecream. I've just had a word with Roger and the nice fella said that I can have £20 of free software to give to the sender of the best tips EVERY MONTH!!! Get scribbling dear gamers.

GET DEXTER (PSS/ERE)

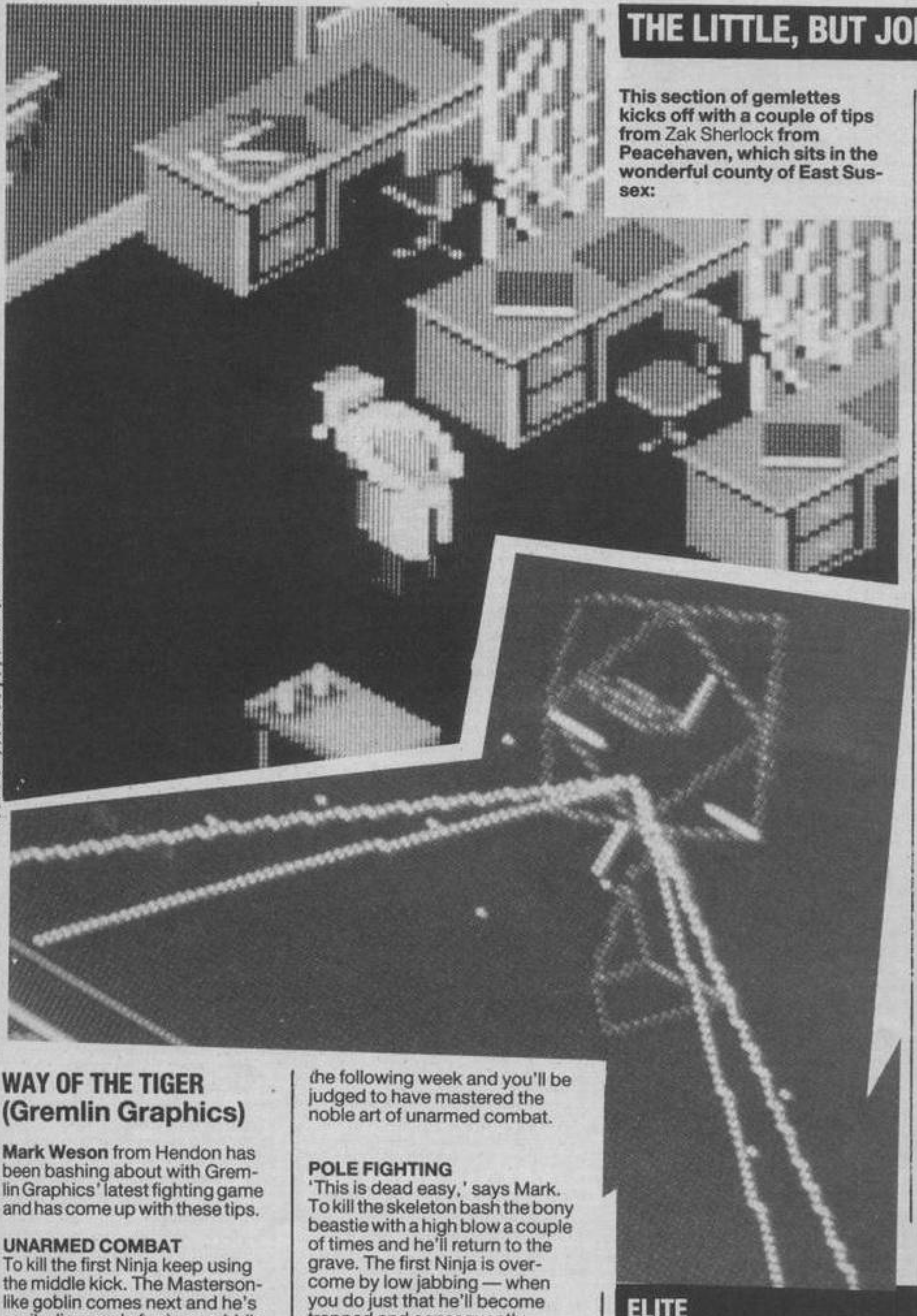
Ta to **Daniel Webster** of Buckingham. He's provided these tips on ERE's brillo arcade adventure.

- To freeze all the robots in a room drop a flying saucer — it'll take off and all robots will freeze in their tracks. Take care, though, the freeze only lasts for a couple of seconds and if you touch a robot while he's frozen he'll become reanimated.
- To get the punks and nurses out of the way drop wine bottles and flowers respectively. 'Pogo stick' and 'Wheelbarrow' droids are distracted by the candle and 'Doggy' and 'Birdy' robots are made harmless by cannisters and lamps respectively.
- Magnets are useful: drop one next to a robot and it'll stick to it, rendering it harmless.
- If you can't find a key card to open a door look around the adjacent rooms — there's nearly always one within the vicinity.
- More oft than not a vital object is on a shelf too high to reach directly, but don't give up. Whenever this happens there are always some articles nearby which can be piled up to make a staircase. Walls can also be negotiated in this fashion.
- Lifts can be activated by walking on a floor pad. There are usually three pads in a lift room, one works the lift and the other two knock ten points of energy off your total, so learn which are safe and which aren't.
- Put an object in front of the Professor's button when you enter his room and no robot guards will appear.
- Behind a certain wardrobe there is a secret passage which leads to a Professor.



THE LITTLE, BUT JOLLY USEFUL TIPS

This section of gemlettes kicks off with a couple of tips from Zak Sherlock **from Peacehaven, which sits in the wonderful county of East Sussex:**



THE WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST (Melboune House)

When in one player mode, go to the far right of the screen and continually high kick. The computer will come up behind you and try and do the same to you, only he'll get hurt and not you.

BEACH HEAD (US Gold)

Having problems with the Kuhnlin gun. Fear no more — here are the correct elevations to allow you to blow it up with ease.

53° 49.5° 52.5°
41° 37.5°
5° 5° 5°

The following two tips are from Mark Dugdale **of Reading in Berkshire. Nice one Mark, keep 'em coming.**

ZORRO (US Gold)

If you beetle down to the crypt, position yourself over the moneybags there and collect them, keeping your finger on the fire button, your score will increase until the fire button is released! You can now score two hundred zillion points without even having to lift a finger.

ROLAND IN THE CAVES (Amsoft)

Anyone wishing to reach the second level while playing this game should press the SHIFT and A keys. Doing so will end the game and you can restart on level two. Whoopeeee!

WAY OF THE TIGER (Gremlin Graphics)

Mark Weson from Hendon has been bashing about with Gremlin Graphics' latest fighting game and has come up with these tips.

UNARMED COMBAT

To kill the first Ninja keep using the middle kick. The Masterson-like goblin comes next and he's easily disposed of using a middle kick and low punch, although watch out for his leaps. After that horrid little character comes the cloaked matey who can be beaten if you thump him around the ear-hole using high kicks and back high kicks. The ugly skull creature creature beetles into the fraccas next and he can be defeated if you wait for him to come close and belt him in his skinny belly with a middle kick. Two trolls are the next creatures awaiting punishment and these can be booted about the screen courtesy of a flying kick. Kick these two guys into the middle of the following week and you'll be judged to have mastered the noble art of unarmed combat.

POLE FIGHTING

'This is dead easy,' says Mark. To kill the skeleton bash the bony beastie with a high blow a couple of times and he'll return to the grave. The first Ninja is overcome by low jabbing — when you do just that he'll become trapped and consequently there'll be no worry of losing any energy — just keep poking.

The little man: use the old low jab and he'll be forced to shuffle off this mortal coil without so much of a mumour. Ninja two is dealt with in the same way as Ninja one, defeat him and you'll have mastered pole fighting. When you're fighting be careful not to jump otherwise you may end up in the drink.

Obviously the next bits aren't so 'dead easy' because Mark hasn' sent any tips on them. Perhaps someone else can oblige?

ELITE (Firebird)

A Wong from East Ham, a borough in our capital city of Londinium says that you shouldn't bother with military lasers — mining ones are the best, and to prove his point he's compiled a 'strike effect' chart.

	PULSE	BEAM	MILITARY	MINING
THARGOID	24	24	12	5
PYTHON	24	24	12	5
FERDELANCE	16	16	8	4
ASP	16	16	8	4
COBRA	16	16	8	4
VIPER	12	12	6	3
KRAIT	8	8	4	2
SIDEWINDER	8	8	4	2
THARGON	4	4	2	1

HEAVY ON THE MAGICK (Gargoyle Games)

Mega tips of the month award must go to **John Mccann** who comes from Lambeg Lisburn in Northern Ireland — he's sent in the complete solution to Gargoyle Game's latest (and greatest?) program.

The order which the locations should be visited haven't been marked on the map as I think that would spoil the enjoyment of getting through the game, it's left up to you to find out where you should go and do whatever you need to do. Don't worry, it's not as difficult as it seems, nearly all things happen within a few locations of one another, you'll just have to explore (anyway, what are you moaning about, it makes it fun). If you wish to succeed, just stick to tips below — that's the order in which things **should** be done, although you can deviate from time to time if you so wish. Oh, another thing — SAVE your position out every so often just in case you foul up, you won't want to to start again when you're halfway through it!

Ready? Here we go then:

Pick up the Grimoire in the first location, but for goodness sake DON'T be a silly billy and pick up the book! It's poisoned and you'll lose a whole pile of stamina (it's a crummy old book anyway). Go east and pick up the gold bag (it's the one on the right hand side of the table, the left one is filled with belladonna and will poison you). Pick up the loaf on level two to earn yourself some more stamina and then find the nearest locked door (make sure it's marked with two circles side by side with the left hand one slightly higher) and open it with the gold bag. Note — all doors marked in this fashion can be opened with a gold bag.

Go to the room called 'Secunda Porta' and get the clue from your good old happy chum, fatso Apex. Say 'Apex, Door' and he'll answer with 'the word is no word'. You can then make your way to the nearest door and say 'Door, Silence', doing so makes the rusty portal swing open on its ancient hinges. If you go through the door you'll increase your grade from Neophyte to Zelator. You're now on level three and it's time to look about for a number of objects — locate and pick up the clasp, magnam key, bronze key, mantos (to increase your experience), leaf (to add Call spell to the Grimoire) and then go SE from a location nearby to add the Transfuse spell to the Grimoire.

Stomp your way to the 'Room of Nami' and open the door you find there with the magnam key. If you then find the correct location nearby and read the leaf there you'll be told 'Achad is one for the pot'. Go back to level two and find the Lithic key and place it in your possession, then go to the 'Room of Ywo' on level three and open the door with the key you've just picked up. Go to the 'Kitchen of Ai' and examine the cauldron there and then examine what is within to get a clue.

Off to level four now to locate and pick up the thigh, skull and ulna. Once you've got the bones return to the cauldron and drop them all three into the cauldron and from a safe distance say 'Cauldron, Achad'. Kapow! Ai will magically appear and is of use later on in the game. Go back to level two and pick up the snake (John's writing is a bit iffy here so it's something beginning with s). Once you've found that (don't blame me, it's his writing) go and find the 'Room of Flox' and open the door there with the bronze key. Now go to level four and find the iron key, then go to level two and get the (again writing grows hieroglyphic, so look for a *something*-pper key could be cipper). Trudge about and find the 'Room of Horns' and open the door with the iron key, then make your way to the 'Room of lethys' (also on level two) and open the door with the something pper key.

Get a clue from the guards by saying 'Guards, Door', they'll answer 'an eye for an eye to enter Paradise'. Return to Ai and say 'Ai, Door' to get the answer 'the way to paradise is long'. Return to level two and find the door which opens when you say 'Door, Long' and go through it to get to 'Heaven'. This is the first of three exits and entering increases your experience points by eight and you will get the message 'well done Axil the very Able. You have made it to an exit'.

Go and find the Alum key and then go to the 'Room of Purity' and open the door with it. Stay on the same level, find the 'Quadra Porta' and get the clue from the guards who stand there. You'll need another clue now, so go down to level one and get one from the guards there: 'cry to enter' they will reply. Open the locked door by saying 'Door, Wolf', although watch out for the nasty werewolves (read general tips). Trudge about and look for the sword, and when you find it pick it up. The searching continues and now you have to find (and take) the chrome key. Keep searching and find the next set of guards who upon asking for a clue reply with 'to enter is madness'. Open the door by saying 'Door, Lunacy'. Pick up the zinc key and find a door which can be opened by the chrome key. When you've found and opened it go and find the door which can be opened by the zinc key. Search around for the garlic, foot, gold bag and gold and don't forget to pick them up when you find them. Find the two doors which can be opened with gold bags and do just that. Find, and pick up the slat and then kill the nearby cyclops. Oh, by the way, once you have the garlic you can kill any vampire — just stroll into them and they'll die.

Still on level one, go and get the tin key and open the door in the 'Room of Claws' with it. Get the clue from the guards, 'to enter say a number of magic words', open the door by saying 'Door, Eleven' and go through it to reach the second exit, 'Pile Collodon'.

Now go and get the flash and shell. Once you've got them go up two levels to level three and get past the water by saying 'Water, Fall'. Once that's safely negotiated find a room where you can drop all your objects (except the shell and Grimoire). Now stroll around and locate a room with an egg and get it by replacing it with the shell. Go down to level one and say 'Nest, Egg' and a Phoenix will magically appear! It's all hard work as you trudge your weary way back up to level three to find the mirror. Return to the room where you dropped all your possessions and retrieve them all. If you have the snake you'll be able to pass the hydra without fear of losing any stamina points. Because you have the mirror you'll now be able to find Medusa and kill her — just walk into her (but don't forget, you MUST have the mirror otherwise you'll be a dead matey). Pick up the brass key and then go up to level four and open the door with the nickel key. Because you have the the flash in your possession you'll be able to pass the chasm. When you've done that find two doors, one that can be opened with a gold bag and the other which can be opened with the brass key. When that has been accomplished find Rabah the Dragon and say unto he 'Rabah, Water', that really gets him worried and you'll be able to pass without him laying so much as a claw on your bod.

Get the clue from the guards 'no south door, what a shame, seek Erlstone for the name' and open the door in the 'Room of Rains' with the cobalt key. Clue sniffing is the order of the day again, so enter 'Tertia Porta' and ask the guards for help. 'Seek firebird to enter door' (they don't mean the software company, so don't go ringing them up) they will reply, so beetle your way back to the phoenix on level one and say 'Phoenix, Door' to get the answer 'LAZA'. Go all the way back up to where you just came from and open the door by saying 'Door, LAZA', then go north to increase your experience points.

Pick up the sunflower from level two and using this object invoke Magot to give the Erlstone. Go to level four and find Belezbar and using the mantis invoke him. 'Belezbar, Pebble' forces him to tell you that Erlstone is inscribed 'Lichgate'. Visit the three portas in turn, ie Secunda, Tertia and Quadra to increase your rating from Neophyte — Zelator — Practicus — Philisophus. To open the door in 'Quadra Porta' take every third letter from the great sign starting with the S to get SORONROS and say 'Door, SORONROS'. Invoke Astarot with the sword and Transport to Lichgate: 'Astarot, Lichgate'. Using the ruby, invoke Asmodee and then destroy the locked door in the 'Room of Shame' by saying 'Asmodee, Door'. Now go north from the 'Tombs of Taro the third' to get the the third and final exit . . .

Oh, the nugget kills werewolves and the pellet kills slugs!
Good luck!

GENERAL TIPS

●**Stamina:**
Can be added to in two ways: 'Eating' jars, bones and rocks, although this can be dangerous since some are poisonous.
If you possess the Transfuse spell you can change five experience points for ten stamina points.

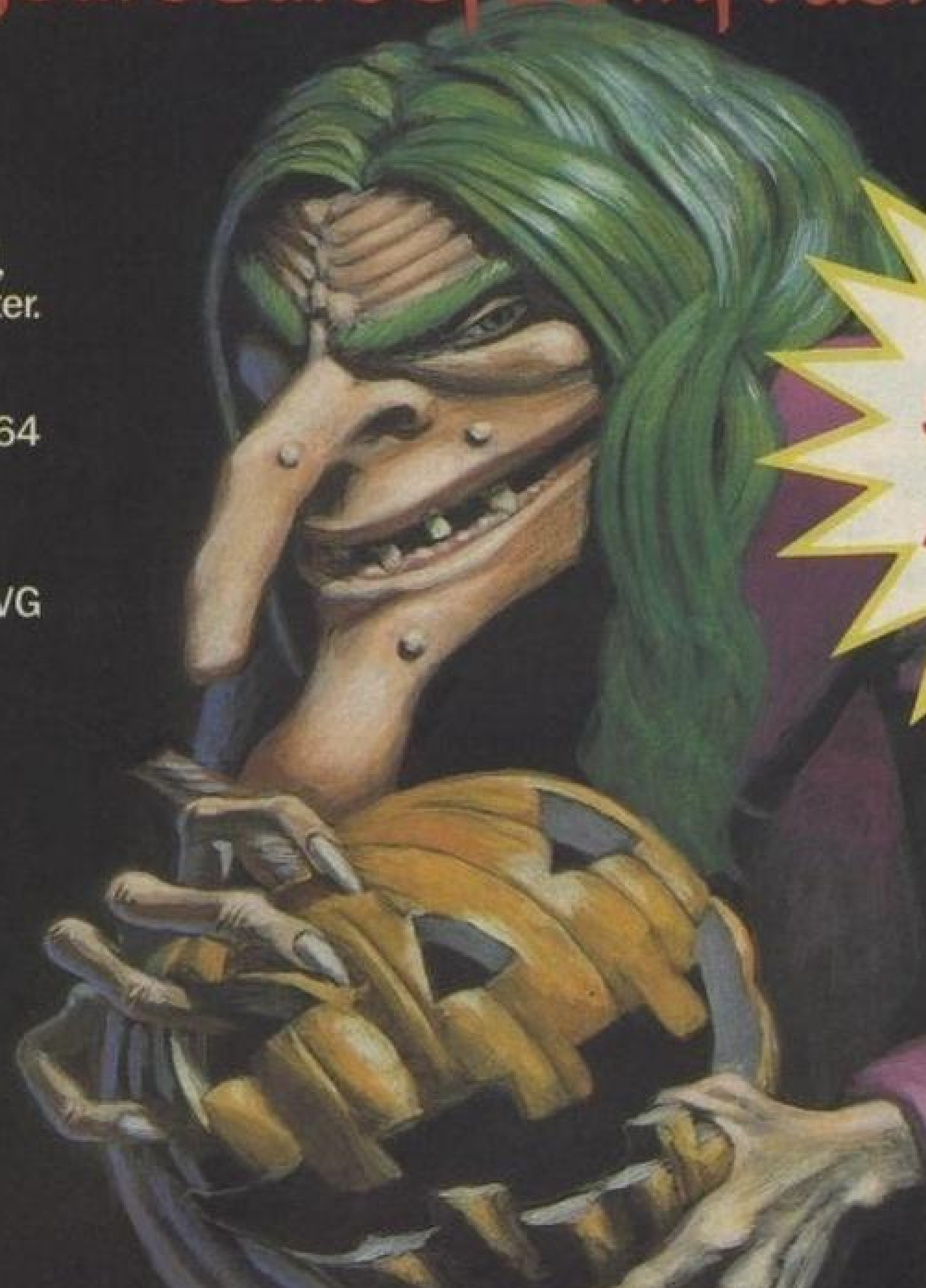
●**Experience:**
is gained by picking up valuable objects such as the sword and mantis and also by reaching set points within the game. Also a kill adds points to your experience, depending on your opponent's cunning and stamina. Remember — never attack anything larger than a Wyvern unless you have it's downfall in your possession ie Medusa, mirror etc.

●**Invoking:**

INVOKED DEMON	OBJECT NEEDED	GRADE NEEDED
Asmodee	Ruby	Philosophus
Astarot	Sword	Neophyte
Belezba	Mantis	Zelator
Magot	Sunflower	Neophyte

▶

If you go down to the woods today...
you're sure of a swift demise...



"Cauldron II looks good, sounds good, and plays even better. Miss it and you'll regret it."
—Zzap! 64

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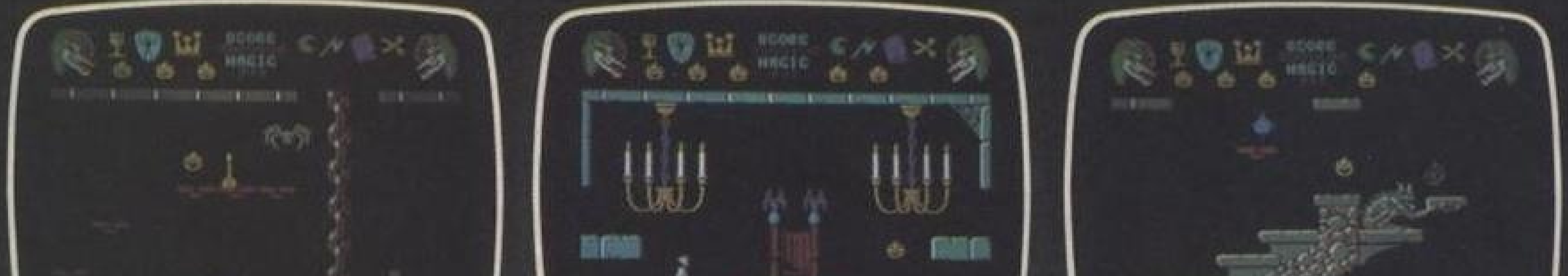
THE PUMPKIN STRIKES BACK



Actual screen shots from the Commodore

Available from all good computer game stockists or by mail order from Palace Software, 275 Pentonville Road, London N1 9NL.

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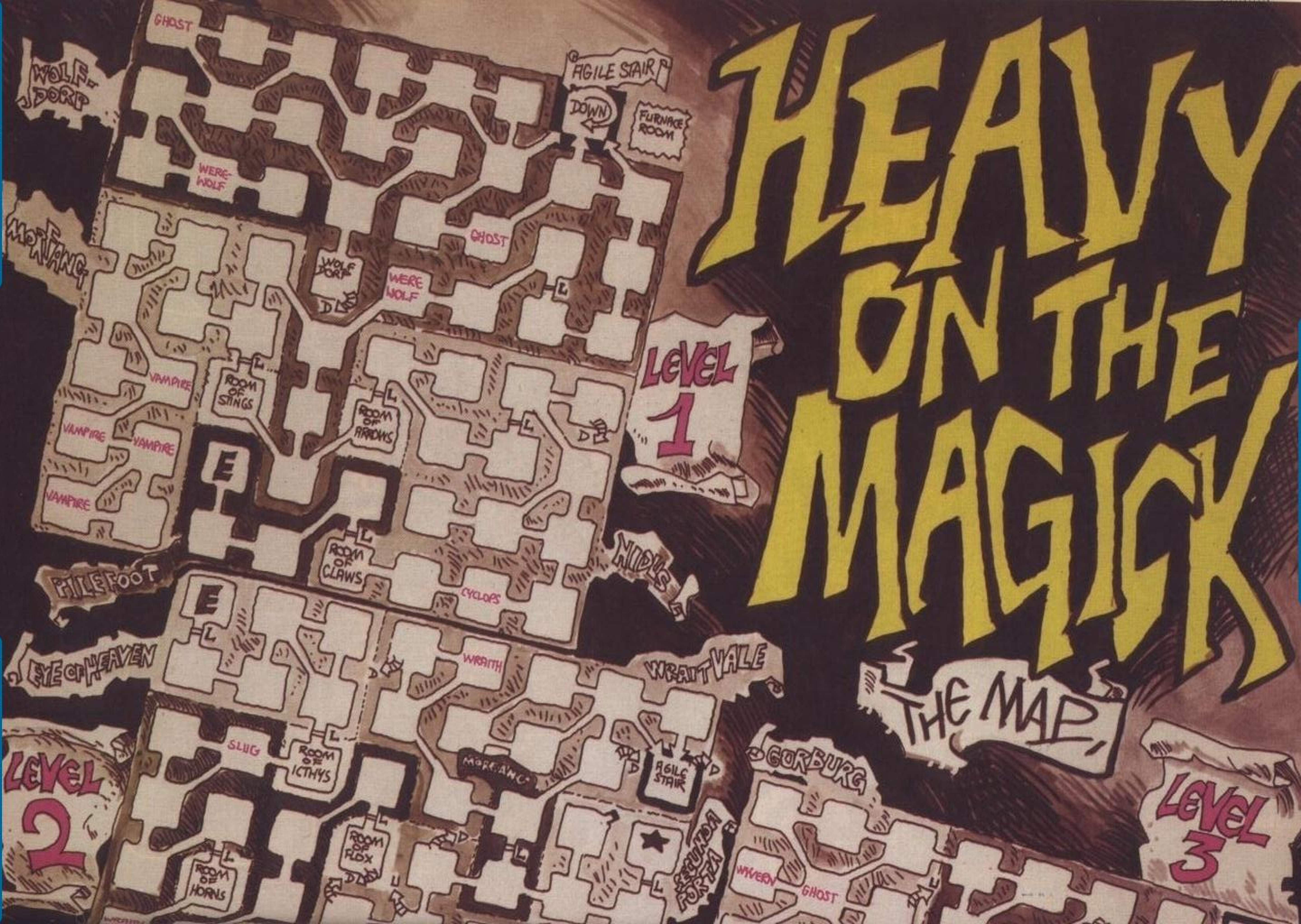
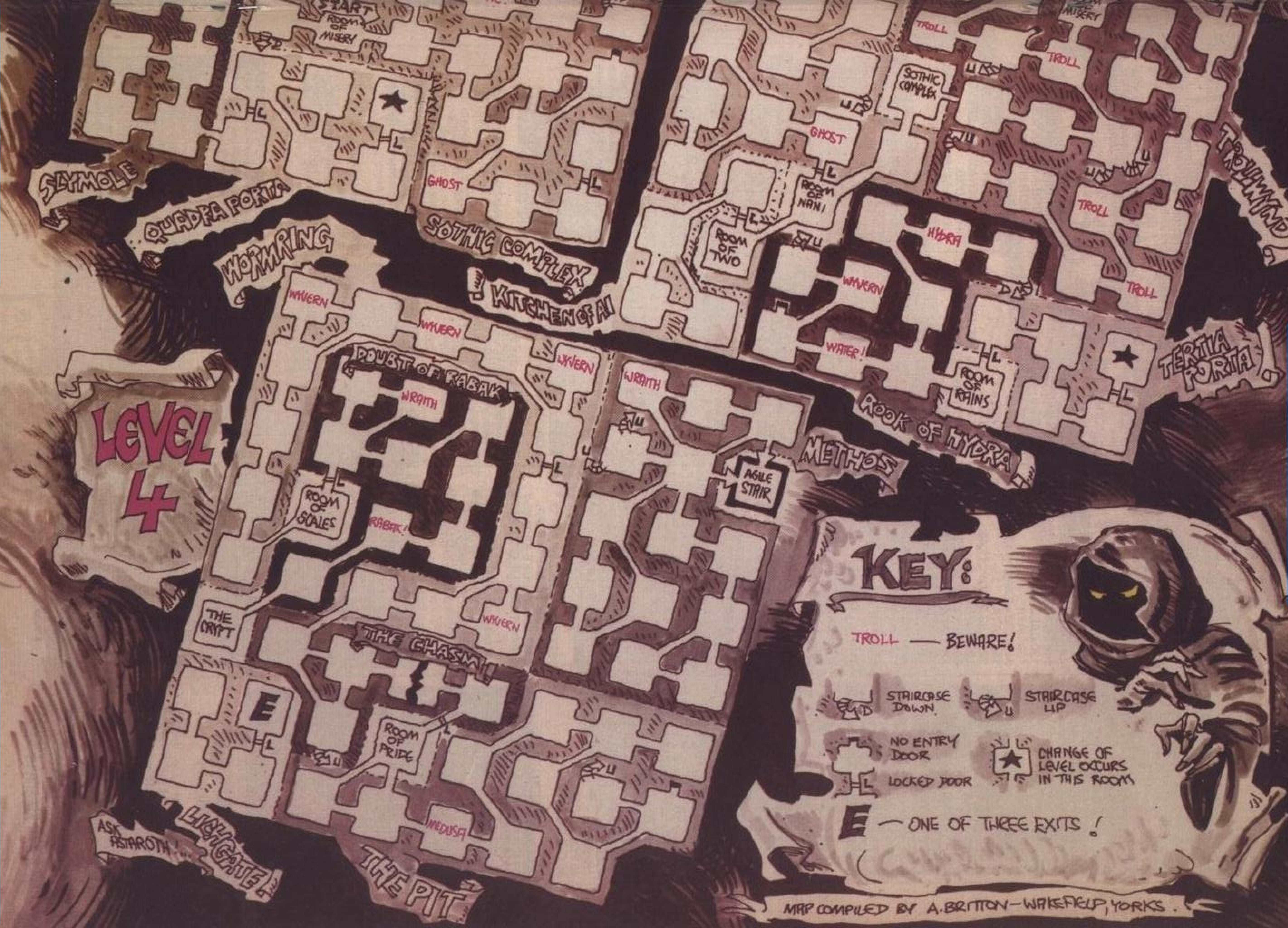
HEAVY ON THE MAGICK

THE MAP


GHOST
WOLF-DORP
AGILE STAIR
DOWN
FURNACE ROOM
WERE-WOLF
GHOST
WOLF DORP
D
WERE WOLF
L
MORTANG
L
ROOM OF STINGS
VAMPIRE
VAMPIRE
VAMPIRE
VAMPIRE
E
L
ROOM OF ARROWS
L
D
LEVEL 1
L
ROOM OF CLAWS
CYCLOPS
NIDUS
PILLEFOOT
E
L
EYE OF HEAVEN
WRAITH
D
WRAITVALE
SLUG
L
ROOM OF ICTHYS
MORGANG
D
AGILE STAIR
D
LEVEL 2
L
ROOM OF HORNS
ROOM OF FLOX
D
L
SECUNDA PORTA
GORBURG
WYVERN
GHOST
LEVEL 3


LEVEL 4
START
ROOM OF MISERY
SLYMOLE
QUADRA PORTA
WORMRING
SOTHIC COMPLEX
KITCHEN OF AI
GHOST
GHOST
SOTHIC COMPLEX
ROOM OF NANI
ROOM OF TWO
TROLL
TROLL
TROLL
TROLL
TROLLWYND
HYDRA
WYVERN
WATER!
ROOM OF RAINS
TERTIA PORTA
ROOK OF HYDRA
METHOS
AGILE STAIR
WYVERN
WYVERN
WYVERN
DOUBT OF RABAK
WRAITH
WRAITH
ROOM OF SCALES
RABAK!
WYVERN
THE CRYPT
THE CHASM!
ROOM OF PRIDE
MEDUSA
E
ASK ASTAROTH
LICHGATE
THE PIT
KEY:
TROLL — BEWARE!
STAIRCASE DOWN
STAIRCASE UP
NO ENTRY DOOR
LOCKED DOOR
CHANGE OF LEVEL OCCURS IN THIS ROOM
E — ONE OF THREE EXITS!

MAP COMPILED BY A.BRITTON—WAKEFIELD, YORKS.

EQUINOX (Mikro-Gen)

Here are some POKEy-poos courtesy of **Justin Garvanovic**. These give you unlimited lives, energy, thrust and time! If you can't solve the game now then I suggest you throw your Amstrad away. Type in the listing and run, put tape in drive and press play . . .

```
10 MODE 1
20 MEMORY &1FFF
30 LOAD "!",&2000
40 POKE &2030,&BE
50 DATA
af,32,3,4f,32,14,3,32,4f,4f,32,7f
,e,c3,0,3
60 FOR n=&BE00 TO &BE0F
70 READ a$: POKE
n,VAL("&"+a$)
80 NEXT n
90 CALL &2000
```

MONTY ON THE RUN (DISK ONLY) (Gremlin Graphics)

More POKEs from Justin. This listing gives you about three tons of mole flesh (well 255 moles) to play with. Just type in the routine and run it with the disc in the drive.

```
10 MODE 0: OPENOUT "d":
MEMORY &57F
20 LOAD "motrdata.sbf",&580
30 LOAD
"motrdcd.sbf",&70E2
40 LOAD
"motrcde.sbf",&C000
45 POKE &C680,255
50 CALL &C000
```

5TH AXIS (Activision)

Justin the hero strikes again, this time it's unlimited energy to help you along. Type in the listing, rewind the tape and run the routine below.

```
10 MODE 1: MEMORY &7000
20 LOAD "",&7530
30 FOR n=&BE00 TO &BE0C
40 READ a$: POKE
n,VAL("&"+a$)
50 NEXT n
60 DATA
3e,ff,32,72,7a,3e,c9,32,41,68,c
3,15,78
70 POKE &794C,0
80 POKE &794D,&BE
90 CALL &7530
```

KUNG FU MASTER (US Gold)

More stuff from Justin, this time more Thomases than you could ever imagine. It doesn't exactly make the game easier since every time you die you revert back to the beginning of the level, but you can practise!

```
10 MODE 1
20 MEMORY 12345
30 b=0
40 FOR n=&BE00 TO &BE28
50 READ a$
60 a=VAL ("&"+a$)
70 POKE n,a
80 b=b+a
90 NEXT n
100 IF b<>4757 THEN PRINT
"Agggghhh! Error on data.":
END
110 LOAD ""
120 CALL &BE00
130 DATA
3e,c3,32,e2,39,21,14,be
140 DATA
22,e3,39,21,ff,ab,11,40
150 DATA
00,c3,af,39,21,30,83,22
160 DATA
30,02,f3,f1,c9,af,32,de
170 DATA
79,3e,c3,32,df,79,c3,37
180 DATA bd
```

TURBO ESPRIT (Cassette or disk) (Durell)

Justin the promiscuous POKE person proudly presents these two listings which supply unlimited cars as you try to break the drug ring. If you have the disk version then slip it into the greedy disk portal, type in the listing below and RUN it.

```
10 MEMORY 6000: LOAD
"tecode.bin",6048
20 DATA
&21,&a0,&17,&11,0,8,1,&a0,&8
4,,&ed,&b0,201
30 FOR i=0 TO 11: READ a:
POKE 40000+i,a: NEXT i
35 FOR i=0 TO 3: INK i,0: NEXT
i
36 LOAD"gdata.bin",49152
40 CLEAR: MEMORY &7FF:
CALL 40000: POKE &800,254
50 POKE &8669,0: CALL &1955
```

If you've only got the cassette version then never fear, just type in LOAD "" and press ye olde returne key. Once the first file has loaded type in LOAD "" again. Once it's finished doing its loading business type in the routine below, run it and press play on the tape.

```
10 MODE 1
20 PRINT "PLEASE WAIT ME
OLD MATE, EVERYTHING'S
HUNKY DORY."
30 b=0
40 FOR n=&BE00 TO &BE1F
50 READ a$: a=VAL ("&"+a$)
60 b=b+a
70 POKE n,a
90 NEXT n
100 IF b<> 2976 THEN PRINT
"ERROR ON DATA, OOPS":
END
110 DATA
21,0,40,11,68,42,3e,16
120 DATA
cd,a1,bc,cd,0,80,21,0
130 DATA
8,11,54,a1,3e,16,cd,a1
140 DATA
bc,af,32,69,86,c3,60,19
150 CALL &BE00
```

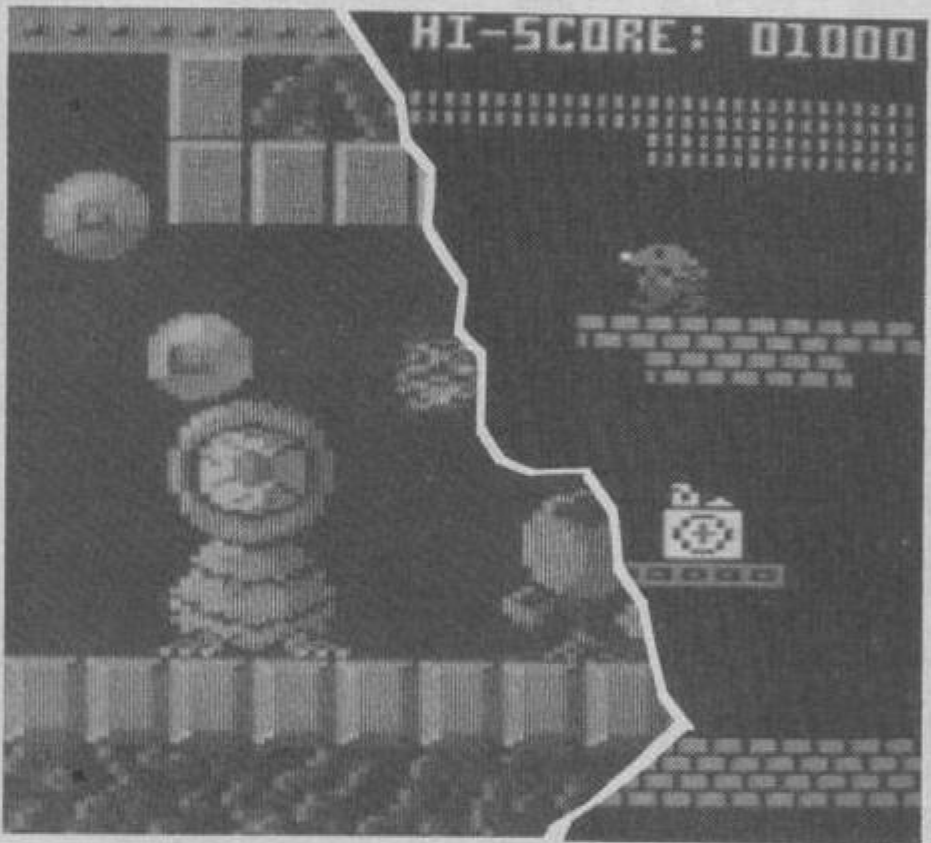
DEFEND OR DIE (Alligata)

Are you getting a bit bored with Alligiata's *Defender* clone? If so never fear — here are some anhilation POKES from **Jon Rocatis** who lives in Hojbjergvej 202, DK2730 Herlev in sunny Denmark.

Plonk in ye tape and let it run until the tune has finished. Here the fun starts. Reset the machine (switch it off or press SHIFT, CTRL and ESC all at once) and type:

```
MEMORY &3FFF
LOAD"",&4000
```

Then load the rest of the program and start it by entering CALL &4025, then get back to BASIC by pressing the AT key (the one next to the P key). You can only do this when actually playing the game, not on the menus, so have a little whizz first of all.



Get everything into BASIC if you haven't done so already and you can now do several things. For instance, if you thought the program was fast then wrap your fingers around this lot:

```
10 READ A
20 IF A=999 THEN END
30 POKE A,0 (CHANGE 0 TO
&CD FOR NORMAL SPEED)
40 POKE A+1,0 (CHANGE 0 TO
&19 FOR NORMAL SPEED)
50 POKE A+2,0 (CHANGE 0 TO
&BD FOR NORMAL SPEED)
60 GOTO 10
70 DATA &4183, &41A1, &5E23,
&62C2, &62DB, 999
```

Whizzzzz. Fast eh? How about some unlimited lives to help combat the speed? You want some? Then enter:

POKE &60E8,0
(change 0 to &D6 for finite lives)
POKE &60E9,0
(change 0 to &01 for finite lives)

Oh, surely you'll need an unlimited supply of smart bombs too? Type in:

POKE &5E07,0
(change 0 to &D6 for finite lives)
POKE &5E08,0
(change 0 to &01 for finite bombs)

With infinite smart bombs it can be tempting to keep blasting, but with the border flashing all the time the eyeballs are somewhat strained. So to cure it enter this lot:

```
POKE &5E0E, COLOUR
POKE &5E0F, COLOUR
POKE &5E14, COLOUR
POKE &5E15, COLOUR
```

Easy eh? How about typing this in.

```
POKE &64F5,0
```

He he!!! Although you can turn everything back to normal by changing the 0 to &AF. If you want some more fun then try out this one.

```
POKE &64ED,0
```

Again normality is restored by changing the 0 to &AF. Quite a fun set of POKEs are those! How about some more Jon?

Dyna ni! That's it! Finito! C'est tout! More stuff next month — and remember that £20 worth of software will be winging its way to the sender of the best tips of the month, so how about some on *Movie*, *Fairlight*, *Swords and Sorcery* and the like? Chuck your tips into an envelope (or parcel) and send them to me at AMTIPS, AMTIX MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB. A special thanks to Kathy for helping me type in the POKEs and to Ben for testing them out.

GIVE GADGI'S MATE A NAME AND PERSONALITY AND WIN A GHETTOBLASTER

Summer is here in the sleepy and sunny market town of Ludlow and various seasonal changes can be seen within the staff in AMTIX! Towers. The humble competition's minion has taken to roving round the office in as little clothing as is possible to wear before attracting the awesome attentions of Aunt Aggie down from mail order. The young and ever-so-trendy AMTIX! reviewers are all looking very summery in their designer shorts and Fila T shirts. Even our supercool editor, Malcolm, is feeling the heat and has forced the poor comps minion to install a sun roof in his 1956 executive bath chair.

The summer madness has certainly spread to the various members of the AMTIX! team, who when they are not parading around town showing off their instant tans, are sitting outside, their beach brolleys set at rakish angles, sipping gently at glasses of cooled Pimms garnished with garden mint that jumps steadily to the pulsating strains of their ghetto blasters.

They really do know how to enjoy their summer and now you can join them in this Great Gatsbian lifestyle by entering this competition and winning yourself the self same **PANASONIC** sound machine but unlike the AMTIX! persons who had to scrape together the pennies from their meagre salaries, you will get yours FREE OF CHARGE, courtesy of the very clever people at **MIKRO-GEN**. They are the boffins responsible for the birth of the Wally family, along with Sir Fred and lastly, and most importantly for us, *Equinox*. In this game you control a disposal droid called GADGI who must remove dangerously unstable radioactive canisters from the interior of a vast asteroid. This fearless and cuddly droid's work is not made any easier by the humans who, when they abandoned the asteroid left the defence systems on resulting in poor Gadgi having to contend with various nasties as he battles to save the homely rock from blowing up. Mikro-Gen are rightly proud of Gadgi and they are planning to develop a follow up to *Equinox* and once again feature the droid. Their problem, and this is where you can help, is that they are a little short of time to work out a new name and personality for Gadgi's fellow droid.

So . . . what they'd like you to do is to dream up a name for Gadgi's brother droid and give a brief synopsis (meaning no four volume best sellers!) of the new droid's personality and more important, a highly original name for it.

There, how simple could it be? If they like your entry you'll be the proud owner of your very own GHETTO BLASTER with which to grace your locale and, generally, send the Noise Abatement Society running for cover. Not only that but MIKRO-GEN will use the name in the next game they write, making your idea go down in the annals of computer game history. If you don't win the GB then don't fret. MIKRO-GEN won't let you sulk for long. Ten runners up will each receive the complete works of Mikro-Gen, that's all the games they've done up to date, and there are also ten third prizes of a copy of *Equinox*.

So, get thinking about a mega name for a new droid and send your entries to **NAME THAT DROID, AMTIX, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB** to arrive at AMTIX! Towers before 18th August.

Runners up prizes of games galore

AMTIX!
COMPETITION

Our resident leprechaun, SEAN MASTERSON, travels to the West Country to visit the headquarters of Level 9 and meet the Family of Fantasy.

SPLINTERS OF MAG

The Austins pose for a rare family portrait. They didn't enjoy it but will probably be grateful in years to come.

I thanked the chatty taxi driver who had taken me from the station at Weston Super Mare and climbed out of the car onto the dusty hill road. He pointed upwards to a point where the verdant wall of trees was broken, intermittently, by a few imposing, but brightly coloured houses overlooking the valley and the river Avon. Then he was gone, sunlight glinting from the rear window of his cab as it sped off back to civilisation.

Lifting the camera strap to a more comfortable position over my shoulder, I started up the hill. The road was narrow and pitted but I soon found myself approaching the well tarmaced drive that led to the hillside abode of the biggest name in adventure games this side of the big pond. In the gentle Spring sunlight, the house gleamed and seemed welcoming. But I could imagine the same scene on a cold and foggy winter night and could see where some of Pete Austin's chilling descriptive prose was rooted.

I was met on the patio by Margaret Austin, the lady responsible for Level 9's advertising. She had come over from Reading where her office is situated. She led me into the house itself. What would normally be a living room was filled with computers of all descriptions. From an IBM PC and an Atari ST to a Commodore 128D (which was running some colourful graphics on an impressive 26 inch monitor). The room was enormous and made to seem even bigger by several picture windows overlooking the valley below.

Off from this room was Pete Austin's office. Though smaller than the main room, it was still large and spacious. At Pete's desk stood a heavily expanded BBC system which was used as a development system running CP/M. Along one wall were shelves filled with folders containing material for new and old games. Then there was a massive wall map, made by Pete. This was to form the basis of the multi-user system, *Avalon*. The map was one hundred by one hundred squares. Some key areas could be expanded by a further ten by ten to allow exploration in detail by a character. *Avalon* will be big!

THE MISTS OF AVALON

Pete spent a lot of time going into the details of *Avalon*. He's fairly proud of it and hopes it should be up and running before the end of the year. 'I don't think MUD is fair', he said. 'I was killed for carrying a lighted candle down to a coal cellar. Apparently the flame ignited coal particles in the air and my character was killed in the explosion.' He shrugs his shoulders nonchalantly. Such things may be possible but in his game, people will have a fair chance of avoiding death.

Apart from all this techno-junk downstairs, a couple of the upstairs rooms held yet more machinery for the conversion and play testing of the games. If Level 9 were ever to hit hard times, they could always open a museum of home computing.

With the offer of a much needed coffee, I was lured back downstairs and began chatting to Margaret and Pete. I was introduced to Margaret's new assistant, Mary, not a member of the family, but a new recruit to help with Margaret's ever increasing work load. Another sign that this company continues to go from strength to strength.

Pete continued to talk about his new multi-user fantasy game. It will have several interesting features. One of his gripes about the established MUD is that there are not enough adventure type puzzles in it. It plays more like a rat-race with scenery. What's wrong with that? Well, Pete thinks individuals could get a lot more out of a system that presented a more direct challenge to the user.

There will also be a hierarchical system of representation. In MUD, you are always told when someone else enters a room or location. This won't necessarily happen in *Avalon*. 'If you're a thief, you would probably want to blend into the background,' said Pete, 'and if you're a noble, you are not going to take too much notice of the peasants hanging around. After all, a lot of them will be non-player characters. So to the noble, it doesn't appear that anyone important is around, while to the thief, the noble's appearance is obvious.'

Everybody also had a giggle when Pete pointed out that the system that would be set up to run *Avalon* would only cost a fraction of that used to moderate MUD and yet be both faster and much more powerful. Pete again made it clear that a good deal of research had gone into the design of this game and inspiration had been garnered from wide literary sources and various established role playing games to add trimmings to their avante guarde project.

HACK 'N' SLAY

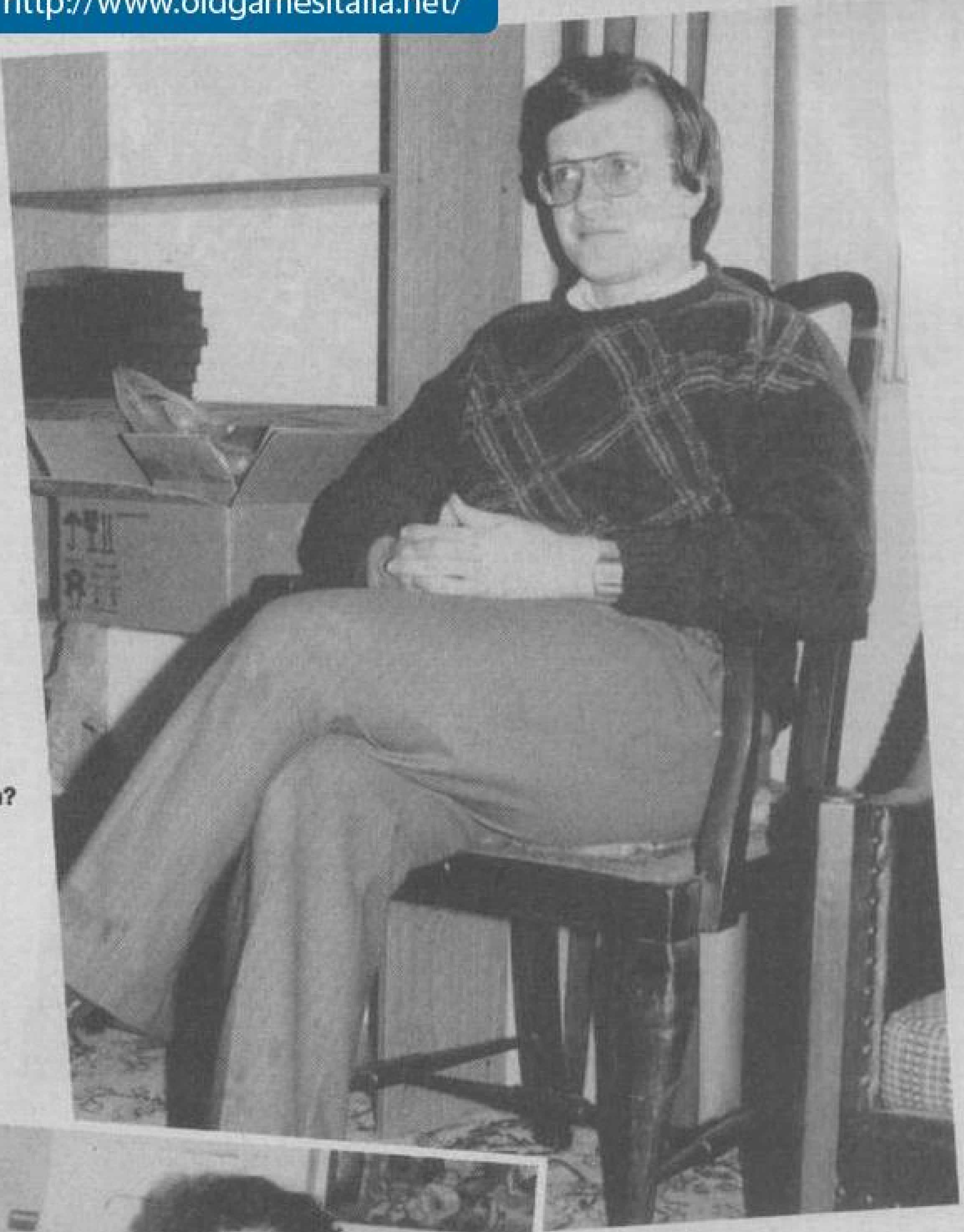
Much of the team's current work was with *The Price of Magik* (reviewed last issue). This was being converted on to various system standards when I visited them, the main programming long since having been finished. Pete

IK

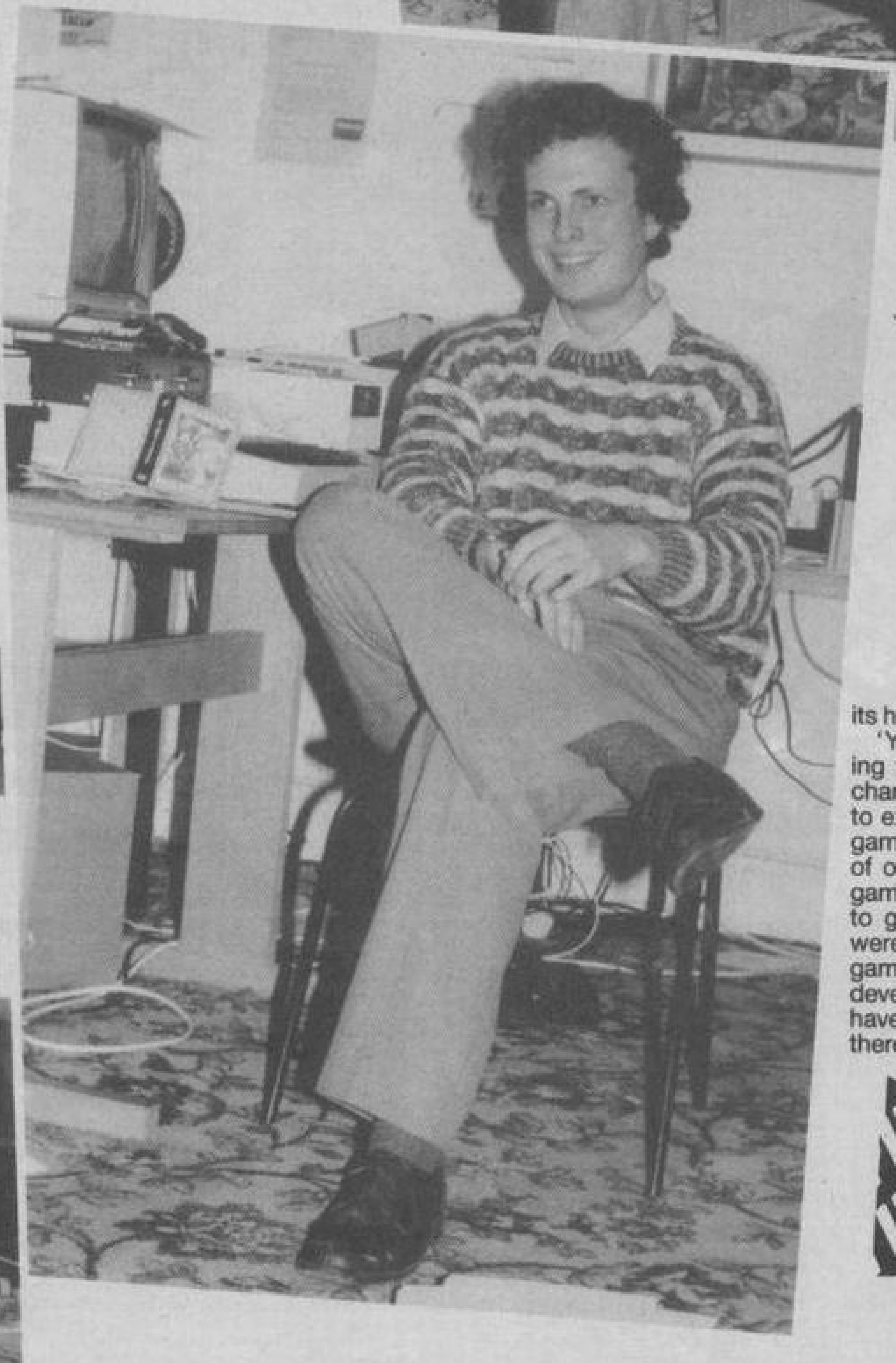
said, 'It's a hack and slay game — because that's what people wanted. In another way, it's a very different kind of game. It's almost a game about not picking things up.'

What he was trying to say of course, was that Level 9 had responded to public demand to a degree, giving them what would appear to be a standard adventure game on the surface, but they had still tried to break new ground in more subtle ways. 'There's this vampire bat,' started Pete, eyes staring into the distance and tongue set firmly in cheek, 'and it's one of the few creatures that will help you. Most people will think it's yet another monster and kill it, but in fact it's quite a friendly bat and you do need its help.

'You can't win this game without remembering two things. You must interact with other characters and manipulate magic.' He went on to explain that the form of magic used in this game was more of a flexible tool than a series of offensive and defensive spells as in other games. Spells could be built up or combined to get different effects. These combinations were one of the fundamental puzzles of the game. A lot of work also went into character development. The Austins would have like to have elaborated further with the characters but there was too little memory.



Eyes Right! Wonder who's just walked in?



Margaret Austin contemplates incorporating Pot Black in a future marketing campaign — lateral thinking at its best.

MOVING WITH THE TIMES

Of course, *The Price of Magik* was only the latest in a long line of successful games that stretched as far back as the Nascom computer. Since those early games, the Austins had improved the parser used on their adventures, experimented with unusual (and sometimes unreadable) character sets, and had introduced graphics into their games. They don't rest on their laurels. Again, graphics were introduced because of public demand but where possible, the company try to cater for all tastes. 'We think we have the balance about right between graphics and text. Of course, you can always switch the graphics off.'

Now they are spending much of their time re-hashing the older games, including graphics and implementing the new parser. The company's graphics are not famous so much for their quality (though they do have a certain surreal charm) so much as their quantity. There are usually as many graphic screens as there are locations — over two hundred in most of their games. The parser, on the other hand, no longer handles just two-word inputs but a whole string of complex structure commands and multi-command inputting. On the most recent offerings, you can back step through a Level 9 game using an OOPS command and 128K machines have been taken advantage of with RAMSAVE facilities.

The reason for digging up all those old 'Monty Haul' dungeons and reworking them arises from a new deal that has been sturck with the software house, Rainbird. The new deal will mean a new life for the improved versions of these games on a variety of machines from the Atari ST and Amstrad 8256. The first trilogy will be *Jewels of Darkness* and will comprise of *Colossal Adventure*, *Adventure Quest* and *Dungeon Adventure*. Later on in the summer, *Time and Magik* will appear and will consist of *Red Moon*, *The Price of Magik* and *Lords of Time*. This latter trilogy will actually be published by Level 9 however, and not by Rainbird. Both will be disk only trilogies.

MORE MOSAIC

One of Level 9's older relationships is with Mosaic Publishing and at least two more collaborations are planned here. The first of these will be one of the most unusual software spinoffs to arise from the media, *The Archers*. Yes, we are talking about those same Archers who grace the airwaves on Radio Four year after year. The game will be a comedy actually written by the programme authors and transferred to computer format by Level 9. After that reaches the shops (expected to be sometime this autumn), there will be a follow up to *Adrian Mole*, released earlier this year. Probably based on *Growing Pains*, the game is likely to retain the multiple choice format established in the original.

OVER THE POND

There is more to these deals than another excuse to keep releasing or re-releasing products. Rainbird will take on the task of introducing the American gaming public to Level 9. Something which has not happened to date. Level 9 have an almost unshakable reputation in the home computer industry in this country but in the states, they will have to contend with the gaming giant Infocom and its many imitators.

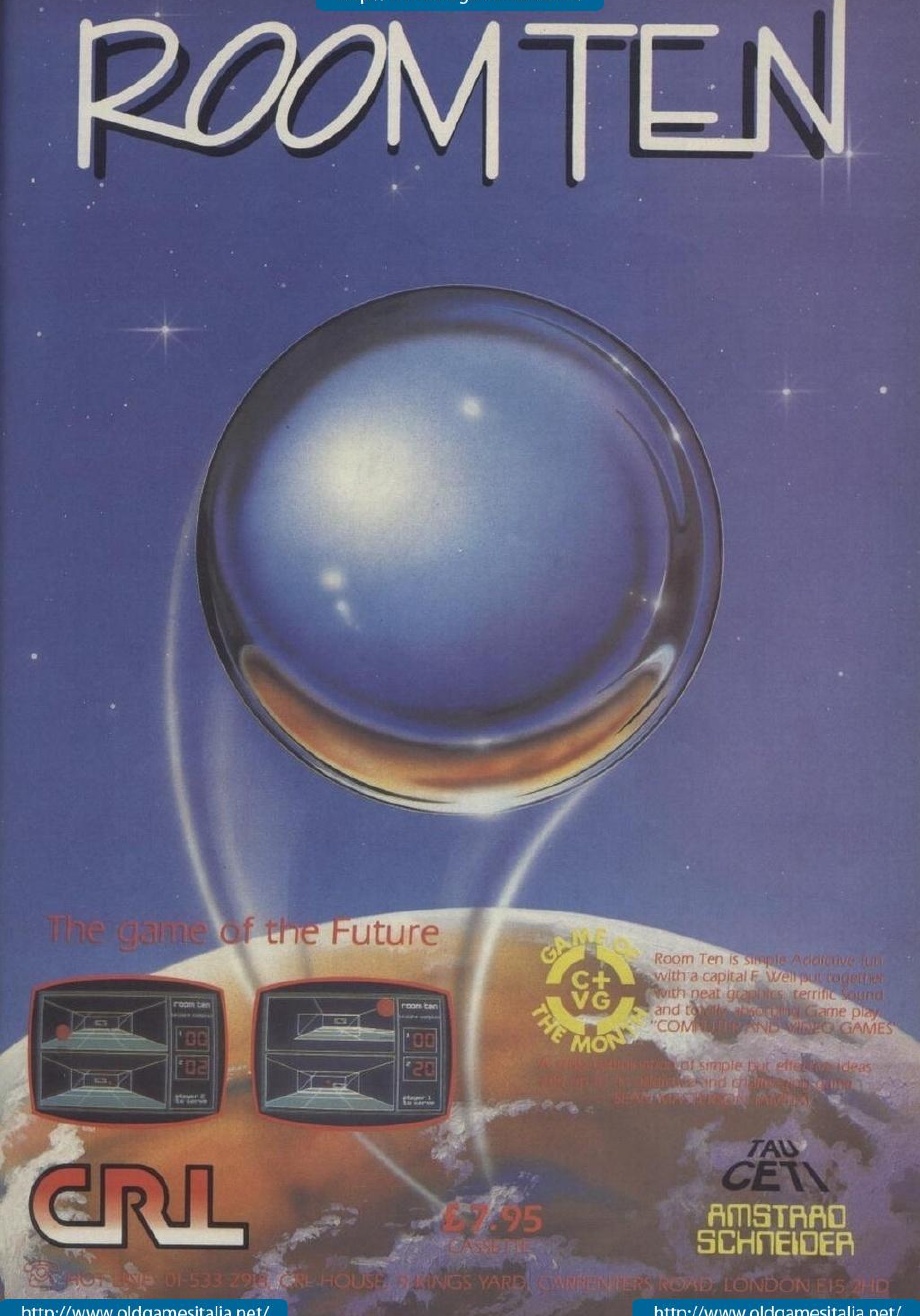
Though Infocom is seen as the only threat, the Austins are confident that they can match the quality and reputation of these competitors. They see Infocom as being as falable as anyone else. '*Hitch-Hikers* wasn't very good,' exclaimed Peter. When I asked him to elaborate, he mentioned how silly it was to be able to get almost to the very end of the game without so much as a hint that you might have made a mistake earlier on. Nor did he and the others think a lot of *A Mind Forever Voyaging*, Infocom's biggest game to date. Nice ideas, they thought but not magnificently implemented.

Though they cannot match the American giant's reputation for being classic game designers world wide, it's important to note that they have always developed their products in a far more restricted environment — the cassette game. Something which is now history as far as the US market is concerned. Yet it's doubtful whether Infocom could match Level 9's ability in areas such as data compaction. The relatively impoverished British micro user has led to them being experts in making the most out of nothing. By comparison, Infocom's techniques are almost sloppy.

GREEN AND PLEASANT LANDS

Level 9 respect other producers of adventure games but are perhaps a little immodest about their own abilities. However, when they say they can do something, they're usually right. They are surely one of the most unusual software companies in existence. A family that works together (even their parents still have a working hand in the company) and succeeds with every move it makes. New ideas are stacked neatly in folders, computers hide in every corner of their beautiful house, the cows graze ignorantly in the fields of the valley below and somehow, the combination of these factors keeps the fertile imaginations and enthusiasm of the Austins fuelled. I wonder if they listen to Pink Floyd as well. I'll ask them next time I'm there.

ROOM TEN


room ten
00
02
player 2 to serve
room ten
00
20
player 1 to serve
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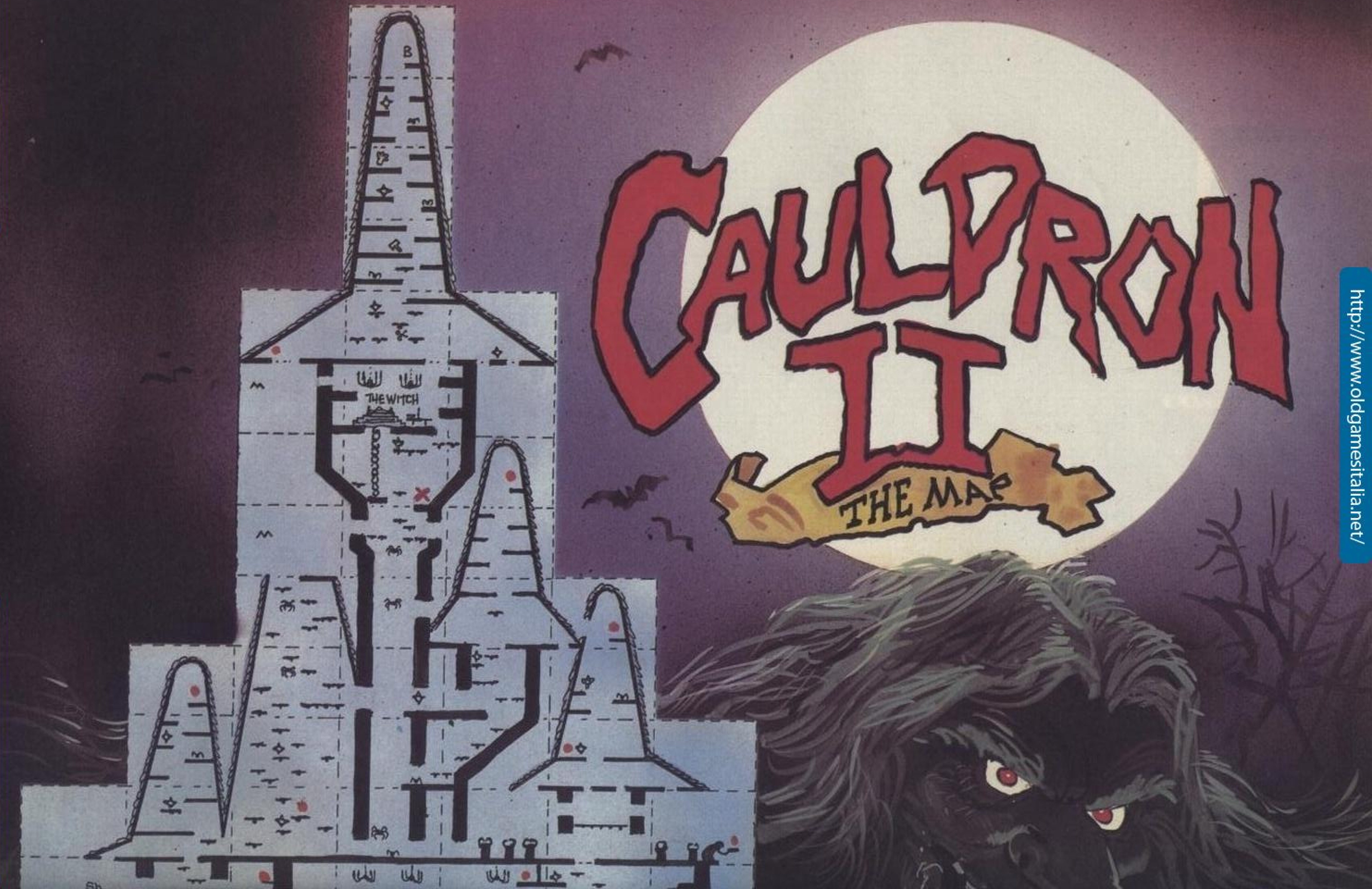
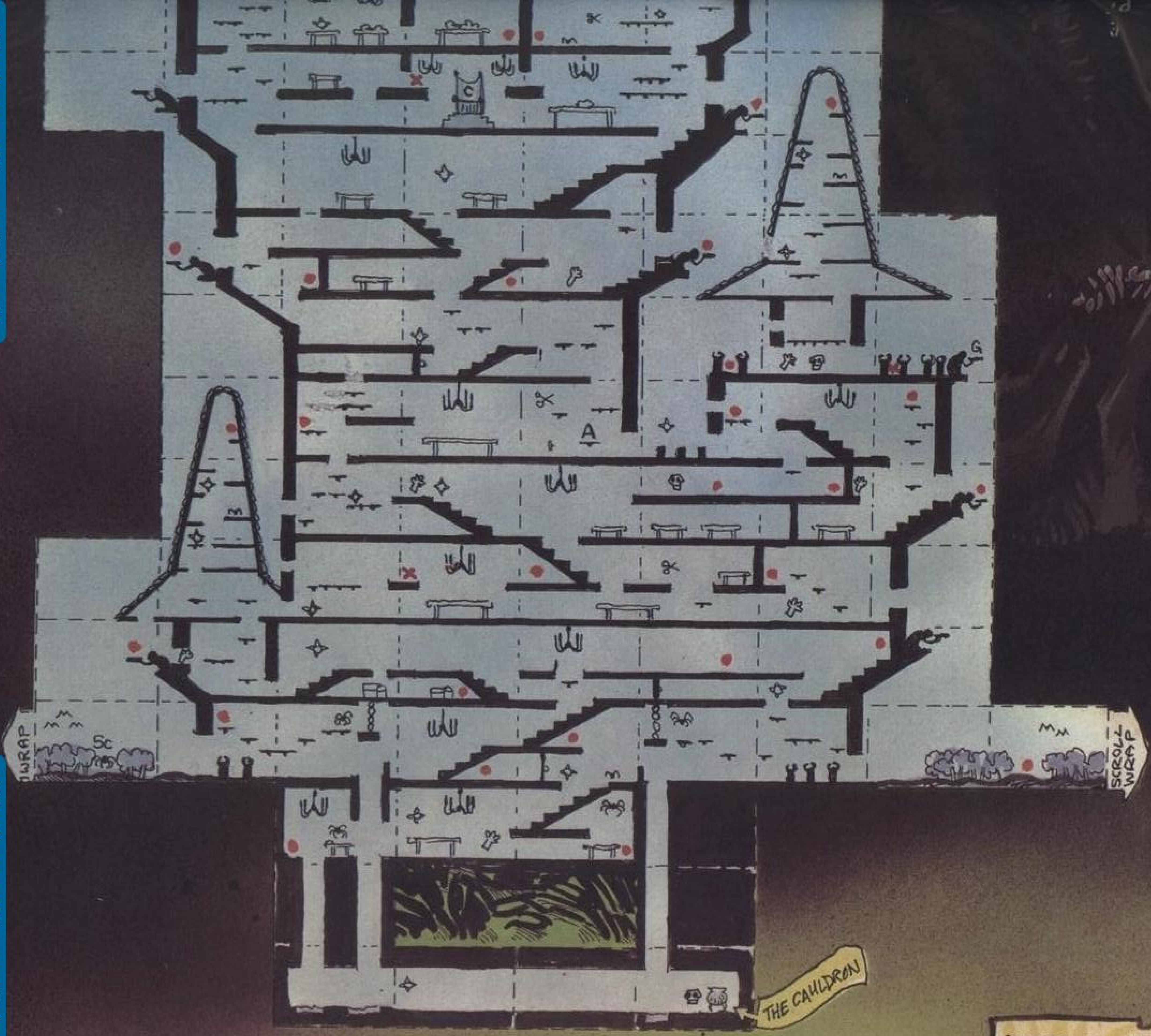
CAULDRON II

THE MAP




WRAP
Sc
A
C
G
SCROLL WRAP
THE CAULDRON

KEY

START POSITIONS: ×

MAGIC OBJECTS

●	POWER POINT
Sc	SCISSORS
Sh	SHIELD
C	CROWN
B	BOOK
A	AXE
G	GOBLET

SOME NASTIES

ᴍ 🕷	SPIDERS
✦	METAL MINE
💀	SKELETON
✋	REVERSE CONTROLS HAND

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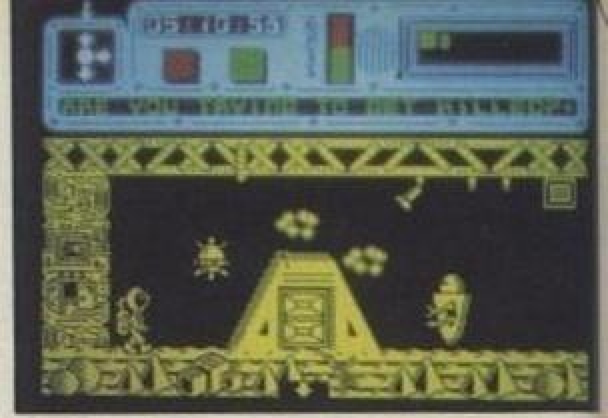
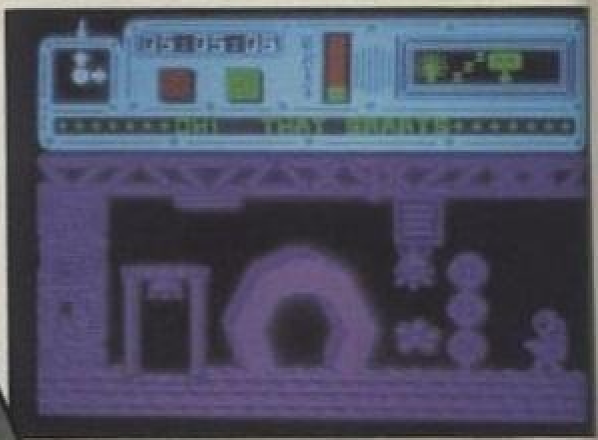
AND DAVID SHRIMPTO





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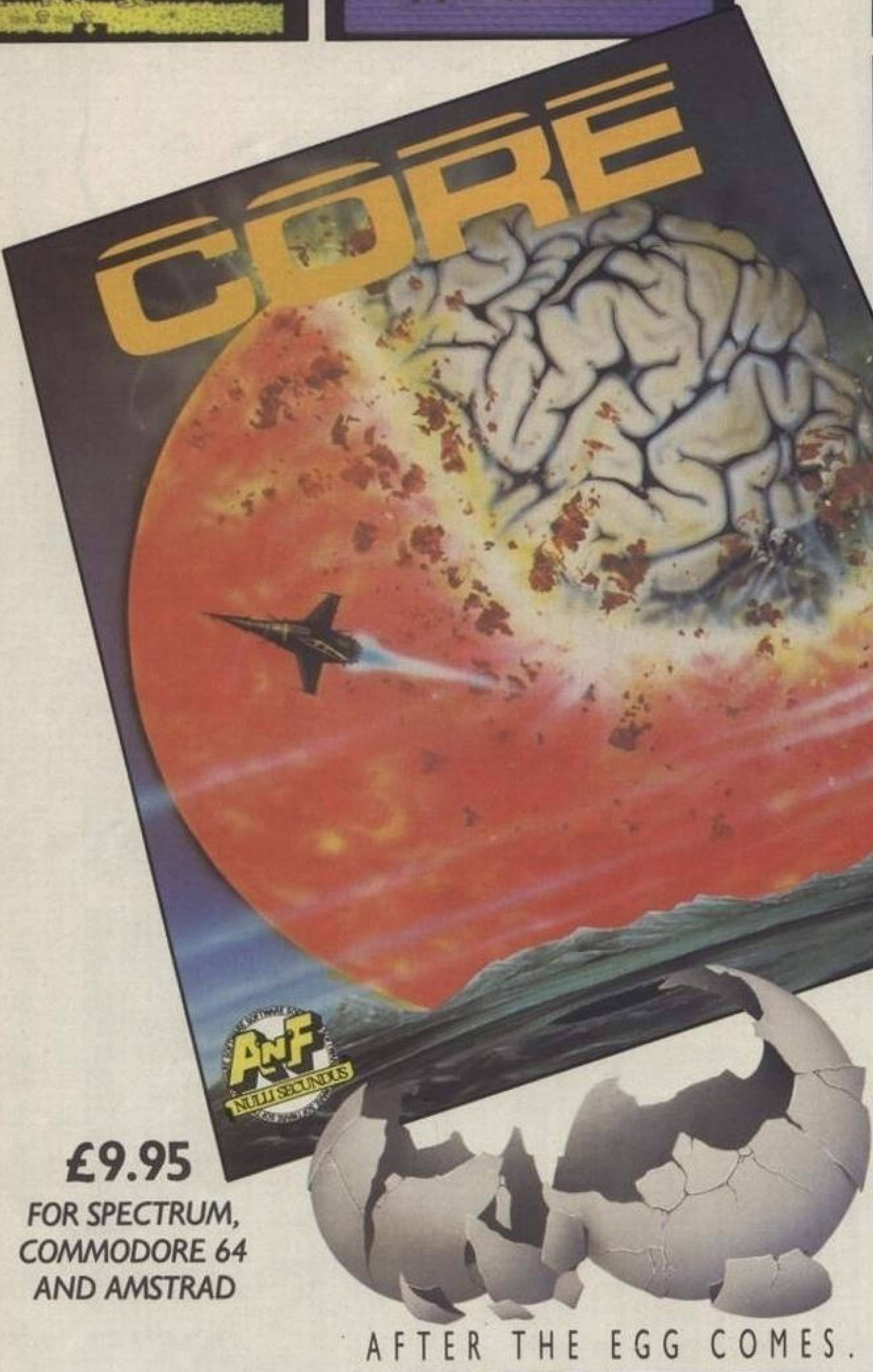

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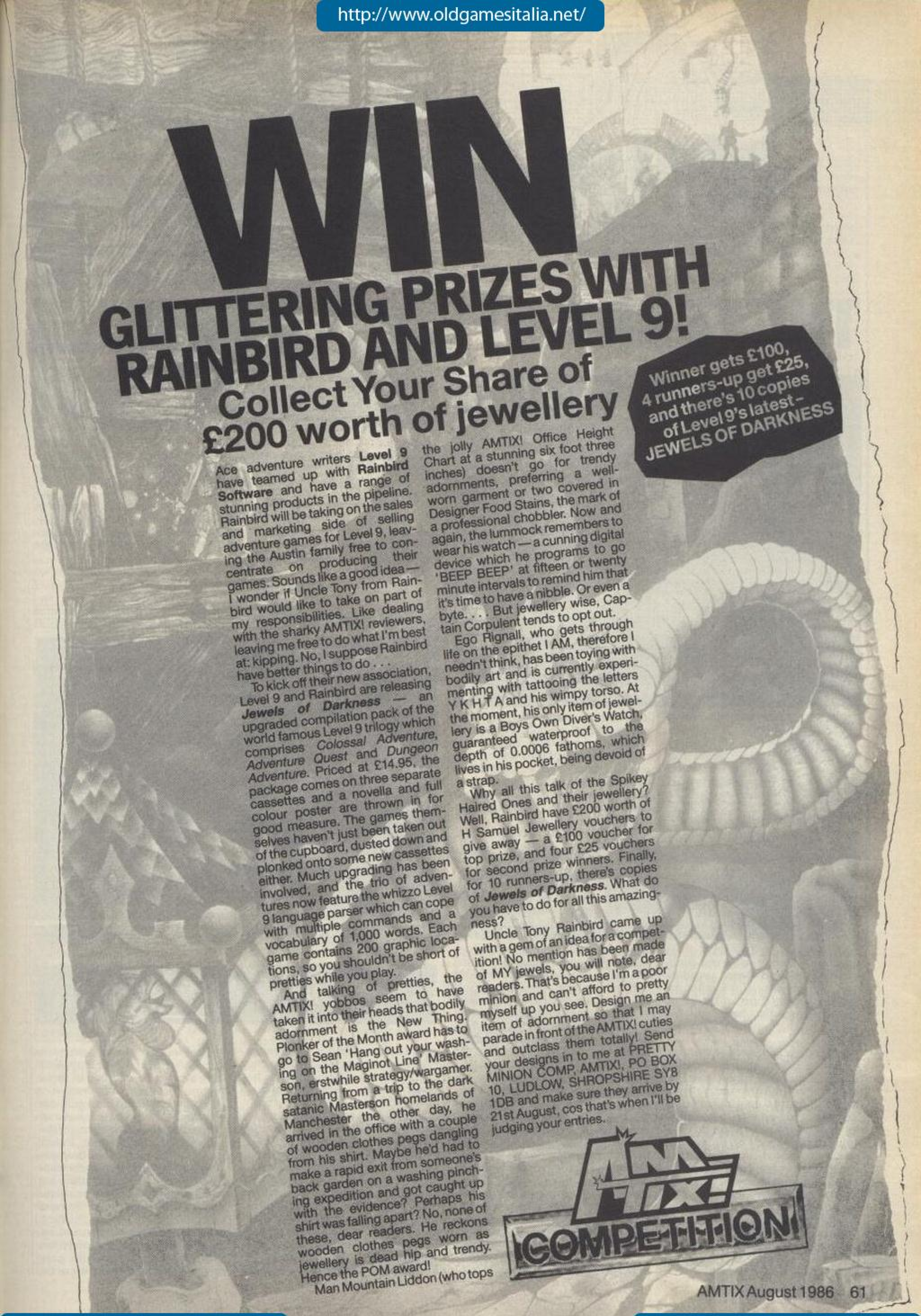


WIN

GLITTERING PRIZES WITH RAINBIRD AND LEVEL 9!

Collect Your Share of £200 worth of jewellery

Winner gets £100, 4 runners-up get £25, and there's 10 copies of Level 9's latest – JEWELS OF DARKNESS

Ace adventure writers **Level 9** have teamed up with **Rainbird Software** and have a range of stunning products in the pipeline. Rainbird will be taking on the sales and marketing side of selling adventure games for Level 9, leaving the Austin family free to concentrate on producing their games. Sounds like a good idea — I wonder if Uncle Tony from Rainbird would like to take on part of my responsibilities. Like dealing with the sharky AMTIX! reviewers, leaving me free to do what I'm best at: kipping. No, I suppose Rainbird have better things to do . . .

To kick off their new association, Level 9 and Rainbird are releasing ***Jewels of Darkness*** — an upgraded compilation pack of the world famous Level 9 trilogy which comprises *Colossal Adventure*, *Adventure Quest* and *Dungeon Adventure*. Priced at £14.95, the package comes on three separate cassettes and a novella and full colour poster are thrown in for good measure. The games themselves haven't just been taken out of the cupboard, dusted down and plonked onto some new cassettes either. Much upgrading has been involved, and the trio of adventures now feature the whizzo Level 9 language parser which can cope with multiple commands and a vocabulary of 1,000 words. Each game contains 200 graphic locations, so you shouldn't be short of pretties while you play.

And talking of pretties, the AMTIX! yobbos seem to have taken it into their heads that bodily adornment is the New Thing. Plonker of the Month award has to go to Sean 'Hang out your washing on the Maginot Line' Masterson, erstwhile strategy/wargamer. Returning from a trip to the dark satanic Masterson homelands of Manchester the other day, he arrived in the office with a couple of wooden clothes pegs dangling from his shirt. Maybe he'd had to make a rapid exit from someone's back garden on a washing pinching expedition and got caught up with the evidence? Perhaps his shirt was falling apart? No, none of these, dear readers. He reckons wooden clothes pegs worn as jewellery is dead hip and trendy. Hence the POM award!

Man Mountain Liddon (who tops the jolly AMTIX! Office Height Chart at a stunning six foot three inches) doesn't go for trendy adornments, preferring a well-worn garment or two covered in Designer Food Stains, the mark of a professional chobbler. Now and again, the lummock remembers to wear his watch — a cunning digital device which he programs to go 'BEEP BEEP' at fifteen or twenty minute intervals to remind him that it's time to have a nibble. Or even a byte. . . . But jewellery wise, Captain Corpulent tends to opt out.

Ego Rignall, who gets through life on the epithet I AM, therefore I needn't think, has been toying with bodily art and is currently experimenting with tattooing the letters Y K H T A and his wimpy torso. At the moment, his only item of jewellery is a Boys Own Diver's Watch, guaranteed waterproof to the depth of 0.0006 fathoms, which lives in his pocket, being devoid of a strap.

Why all this talk of the Spikey Haired Ones and their jewellery? Well, Rainbird have £200 worth of H Samuel Jewellery vouchers to give away — a £100 voucher for top prize, and four £25 vouchers for second prize winners. Finally, for 10 runners-up, there's copies of ***Jewels of Darkness***. What do you have to do for all this amazingness?

Uncle Tony Rainbird came up with a gem of an idea for a competition! No mention has been made of MY jewels, you will note, dear readers. That's because I'm a poor minion and can't afford to pretty myself up you see. Design me an item of adornment so that I may parade in front of the AMTIX! cuties and outclass them totally! Send your designs in to me at PRETTY MINION COMP, AMTIX!, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB and make sure they arrive by 21st August, cos that's when I'll be judging your entries.

AMTIX! COMPETITION

THE THRILL OF CONFUSION

Felicitations dear readers. Ugh, how can anybody start an intro like that? Wotcha scumbags! Bit vulgar but more in character. No, something new is in order, after all, I'm always warbling on about the same old things in these intros and you will have already noticed that this is the adventure special issue so there's no point in going on about that, is there?

I know. When I was at school, we used to play this silly game where someone would begin a conversation and then just when it was getting interesting, stop speaking in mid —

Oh well, none of this seems to be working so I suppose I'll have to continue in my usual vein. After last month's request for 'home-grown' software, three GACked games have found their way to my untidy desk. All of them are the work of amateurs and all were sent in with a thoughtful amount of detailed documentation. I found all the games encouraging and would like to see more authors sending in their work. It is also encouraging to see more people using GAC. As this is now ready for release on other machines, it looks set to fulfill its promise as the new standard adventure writing utility.

Fanzines also arrived this month and these too were enthusiastic and encouraging. If anybody writes a fanzine out there and would like to have it mentioned in the Arcana, then please send me a copy and I'll be happy to print all the details along with a brief critique. Adventurers are well supported when it comes to Amstrad computers (something I made a point of back in issue one) and it's good to see hobbyists using their own talents in the field rather than passively letting 'professionals' do all the work.

I hope you have fun over the summer holidays and take advantage of any patches of bad weather by diving into a good adventure. Actually, I'm busily cultivating a Dreyfussesque, half body tan (qv CE3K). Well it's all a matter of taste — or lack thereof . . . and it's the sun — it's so bright and hot and. . . . yellow.

Be seeing you.

SAS RAID

CRL, £14.95, PCW 8256, disk only

An unusual one is this. It appears that CRL might have found the equivalent of the executive toy for users of the PCW 8256. *SAS Raid* is sold as adventure and an adventure it is — of sorts. It's more like a series of tightly inter-connected mind games revolving around the dubious plot of a *Who Dares Wins* scenario. To my delight (and mild surprise) this one works.

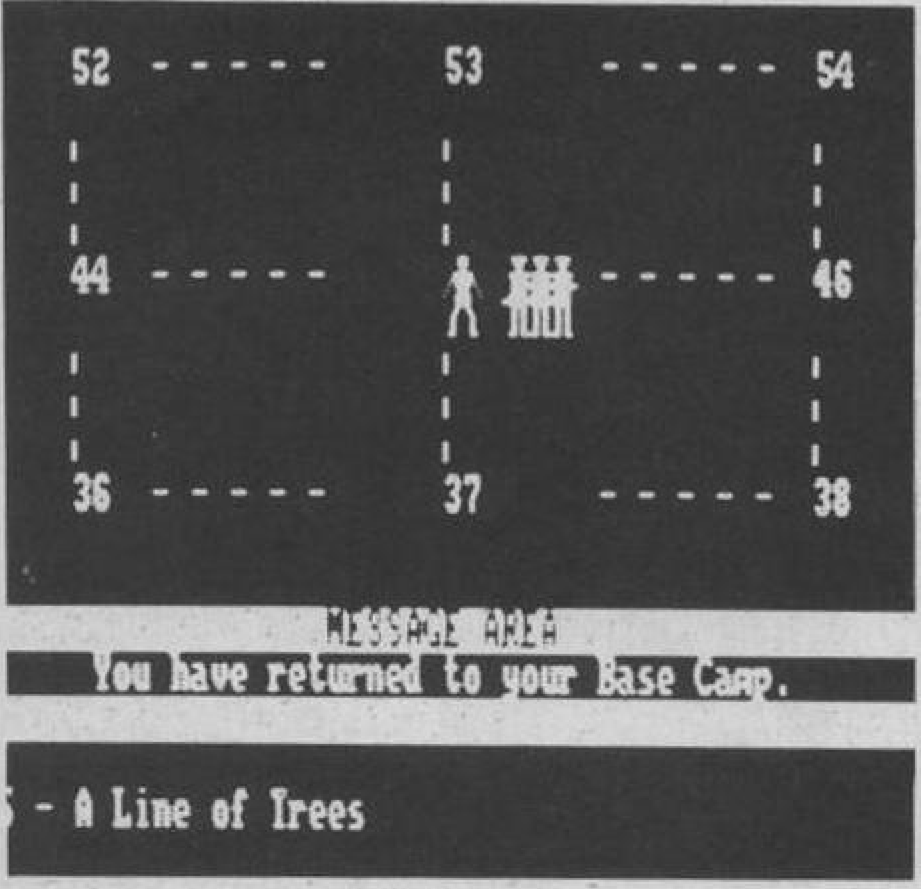
Plans for your undercover SAS base have been stolen by the nefarious enemy (whoever they may be). You have only one hour in which to find them, unaided and return to base. If you fail to do this within the time set or die in the attempt, the base will be wiped out. Not much of a future, eh?

All you are aware of is that the plans are being held in a castle nearby. Equipment must be uncovered from the surrounding area that will enable you to continue the mission. Some of this equipment is absolutely necessary — some of it depends on where the castle is located. As the actual location changes from game to game, different equipment will be needed each time you play.

The screen display is a very important aspect of this game as there is no text input as such. The top half of the screen shows a three by three grid in which you are always the central feature. The lower screen, separated from the upper half by a one line message window, shows how many seconds have been played during the current game, what equipment is being carried, the numeric value of your location along with a brief description of what that location actually is.

Movement is carried out using the cursor keys. When you reach a location with a piece of equipment in it, that item is displayed next to your character in the grid. It may be picked up using the 'P' key. Two items which are always useful are the radio and the map. All the way through this part of the game, you must avoid being caught by enemy patrols. With the radio, you can discover the current location of each patrol (and actually see it approaching). With the map, location numbers are displayed on the grid, making progress much more straightforward.

Should you get caught by the enemy, the game can come to an untimely end. If either the pistol or the uniform is being carried, this can be avoided. Unfortunately, each of these devices only last for one encounter and one of them must be in your possession before the castle may be entered (when it has been found). There are four other pieces of equipment, only one of which may be held at any given time. Each item will negate up to two obstacles. By trial and error, the castle may be found on the other side of one of these obstacles.



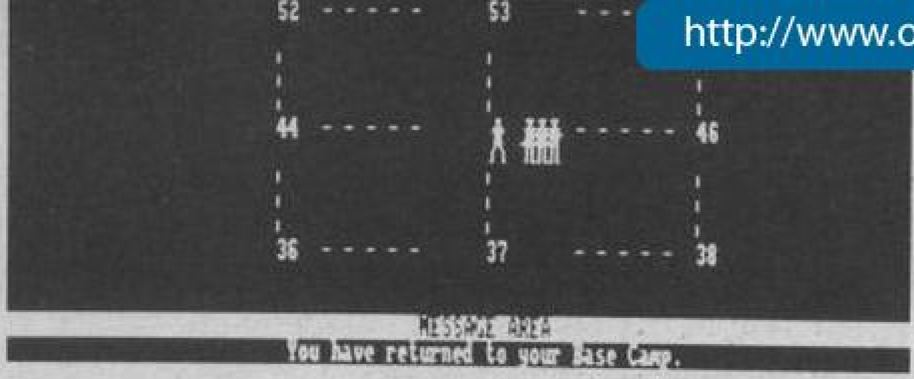
MESSAGE AREA

You have returned to your Base Camp.

- A Line of Trees

Once the castle has been discovered and entered, the game changes shape somewhat. The castle has sixteen rooms, arranged in a circular fashion, each of which may be entered in any order desired. You have to search each room until you find a key. Once you find the key, you must discover which room holds the maps (as long as you have the key, it can be entered). Finally, once you obtain the maps, you must find the way out of the castle and make your way back to base with very little equipment — and still have to avoid the patrols. A lot to do in one hour!

The sixteen rooms constitute the main part of the game. Each time a room is entered, an explanation of the puzzle within is given before you continue. Some puzzles are word based, hand co-ordination based, eye co-ordination based, or require instant recall techniques. Each time you play (or even if you enter the same room more than once), the exact nature of the puzzle to be solved within will be changed. Some of the puzzles are downright easy, others are extremely demanding. Here's a little tip. Make brief notes as you progress through the game or you could end up losing at the



```
You have returned to your Base Camp.
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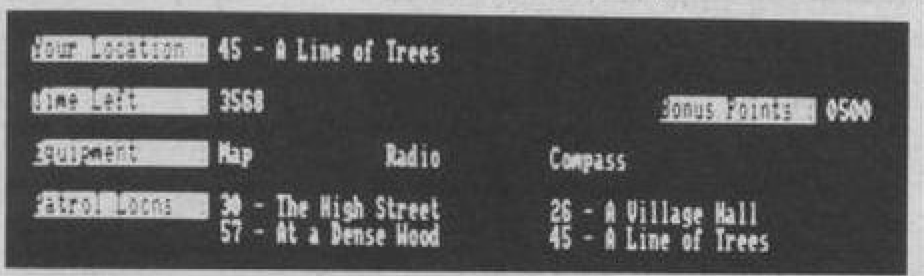
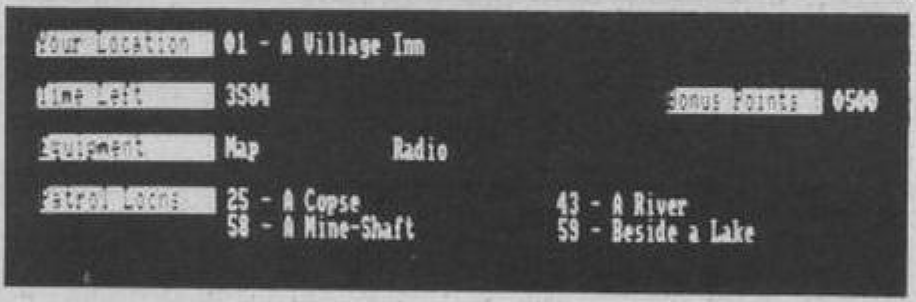


```
Your Location  45 - A Line of Trees
Time Left      3568                               Bonus Points  0500
Equipment      Map          Radio        Compass
Patrol Locns   30 - The High Street      26 - A Village Hall
               57 - At a Dense Wood      45 - A Line of Trees
```



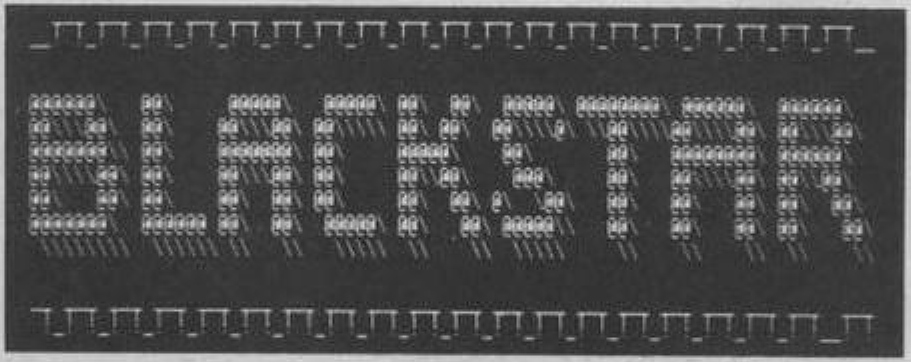
```
Your Location  01 - A Village Inn
Time Left      3504                               Bonus Points  0500
Equipment      Map          Radio
Patrol Locns   25 - A Copse                 43 - A River
               58 - A Mine-Shaft            59 - Beside a Lake
```

last minute.

I played the game for nearly two days solid before I finally completed it on the lowest of its four difficulty levels. You don't even get onto the high-score table unless you do finish the game. I enjoyed it thoroughly even though there was some frustration when I thought that some of the puzzles were purely random. This did not turn out to be the case. However, I can't say I want to play the game again. It's hard enough on level one.

But anybody with a PCW 8256 who wants a refreshing break from word processing (perhaps wants a challenging lunch break) should find enough material in *SAS Raid* to keep them happy for a long time.

Atmosphere	50%
Plot	48%
Interaction	89%
Lastability	85%
Value for money	83%
Overall	**82%**



BLACKSTAR

CRL, £14.95, disk 8256 only

Another from the CRL stable specifically for users of the 8256 is a revamped version of CRL's old *Castle Blackstar* game. It's a text only adventure based around the rather hackneyed theme of collecting treasure from a castle and underground network and returning it to a safe place elsewhere.

The game has the familiar style of location and score updates presented at the top of the screen, whilst the main body of descriptive text, along with player responses, scroll up the rest of the screen. It also appears to have familiar puzzles, mazes, jokes and lack of atmosphere. To tell you the truth, it's all a bit of a yawn. At one point you even encounter a dwarf who promptly throws a knife at you — and misses (a la *Colossal Adventure*) and says, 'None of us are very good at this,' before departing in the same fashion as his ill-fated predecessor. Well, you could see it coming a mile away, I suppose . . .

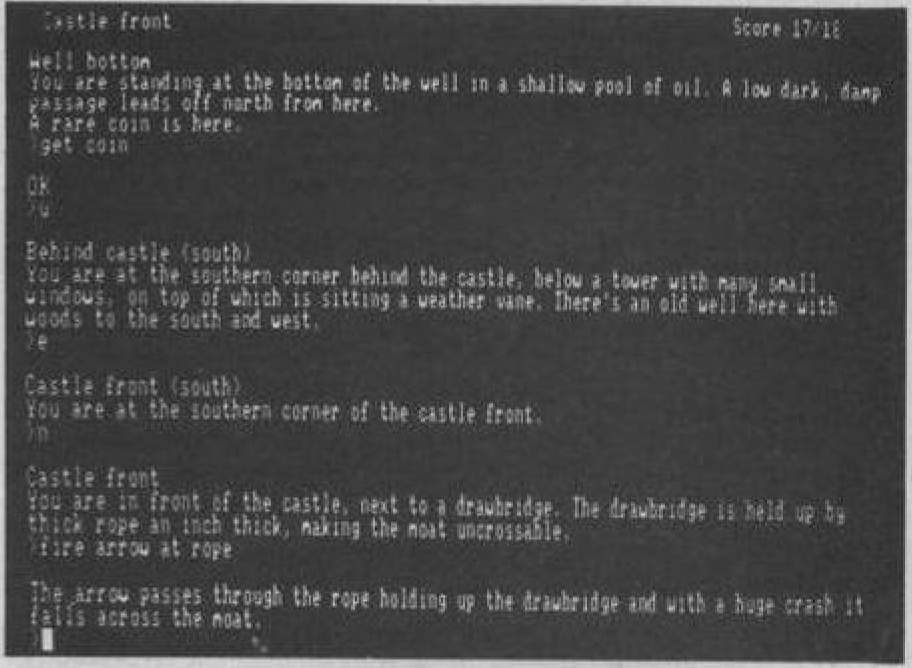
Though I may sound pretty despondent, the game isn't actually that bad — just extremely old fashioned (yes, right down to the parser). In fact 8256 owners might not have seen too many products like it in which case the game is worth baring in mind. However, prospective buyers should remember that for a few pounds more, most of the Infocom range becomes available and there is no comparison between this and *Zork* (or anything else from that great range).

For those who find the puzzles more important than atmosphere or story (or most of the ingredients of a good game) then *Blackstar* does offer something of a challenge. Most of the mazes are sickeningly difficult to get through even old puzzles are dressed in attractive new guises. A map is an absolute necessity for those intent on progressing.

You begin the game on a road with only one obvious destination — a castle. Around the road, in all but one direction, is a dense forest — so dense that you get lost the moment it is entered. However, there are locations worth your attention should you figure out how to reach them. The castle appears impenetrable but a few strong clues and some deft archery will lead you further on your quest. Then there's the well. A well with oil in it? I wonder what that could be for . . .

Sure enough, this well leads to a complex maze of underground caverns in true Zorkian tradition replete with lakes, islands, dead ends and traps and nasties of all descriptions. In fact it seems the only qualification a potential feature needed to be included in the game is that it must have appeared elsewhere in another game. Ho hum.

I'm going to keep this one brief. There's very little that warrants particular attention in the game. If you haven't tried an adventure on your 8256 then this is certainly better than a poke in the eye with a sharp stick. Even if you're a sucker for cliches, you could find yourself burning the midnight oil over this one — oh dear, I've given the game away! Otherwise, don't bother with this one unless you find fifteen pounds a reasonable amount to spend on yawn material.



```
 Castle front                                              Score 17/16

Well bottom
You are standing at the bottom of the well in a shallow pool of oil. A low dark, damp
passage leads off north from here.
A rare coin is here.
?get coin

OK
?u

Behind castle (south)
You are at the southern corner behind the castle, below a tower with many small
windows, on top of which is sitting a weather vane. There's an old well here with
woods to the south and west.
?e

Castle front (south)
You are at the southern corner of the castle front.
?n

Castle front
You are in front of the castle, next to a drawbridge. The drawbridge is held up by
thick rope an inch thick, making the moat uncrossable.
?fire arrow at rope

The arrow passes through the rope holding up the drawbridge and with a huge crash it
falls across the moat.
?█
```

Atmosphere	67%
Plot	63%
Interaction	60%
Lastability	76%
Value for money	62%
Overall	**64%**

ACHETON

Newstar, £9.95, disk (PCW 8256 only)

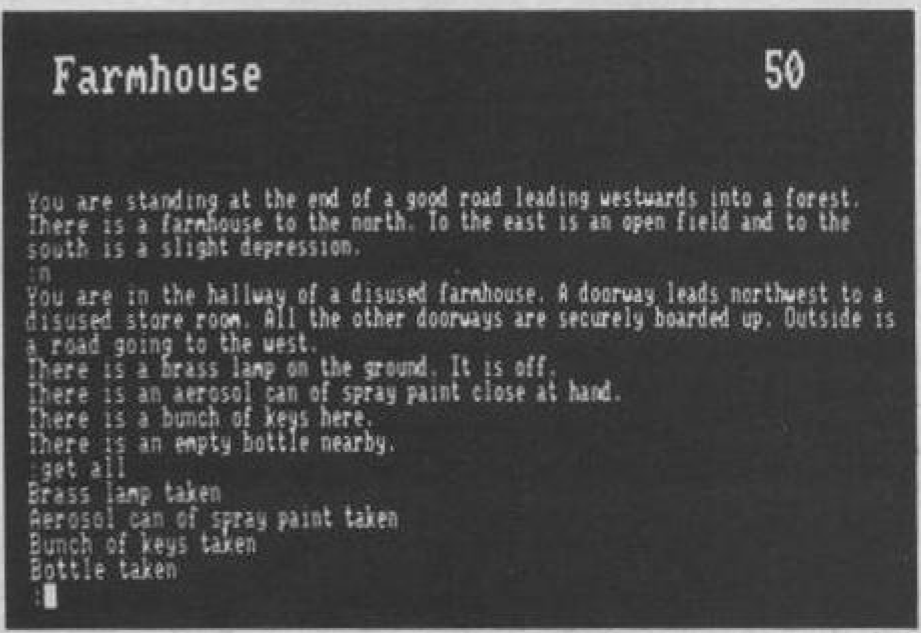
Ex Amtix! Editor Jeremy Spencer may no longer grace these pages with his witty and original editorials but if you think he is no longer involved with spreading the Good News to thousands of Amstrad owners, you are mistaken. For Jeremy now works at Newstar and controls their Ambyte division. Ambyte exists for the purposes of bringing out cassette based games on disk for each and every Amstrad model on the market. In his involvement with this company it has become possible to arrange for several games to appear on the PCW 8256 that may never otherwise have seen the light of day.

Acheton is one of these. Originally programmed and released by Acornsoft in the halcyon days of the BBC micro, *Acheton* is a traditional text adventure with all the trimmings that go to make up a good game. The plot is dated but then so is the game. However, it is executed with such polish that any adventurer worth his salt should have a close look at this one.

As you may have guessed, the basic premise of the game is for the player to wander around a series of underground dungeons and mazes in an attempt to recover treasures lost long ago by people who, by and large, should have known better. The game loads from CP/M in a matter of moments. The top of the screen contains double height characters to display the current location and score. The rest of the screen is used in conventional manner for text display.

The parser and vocabulary are

▶



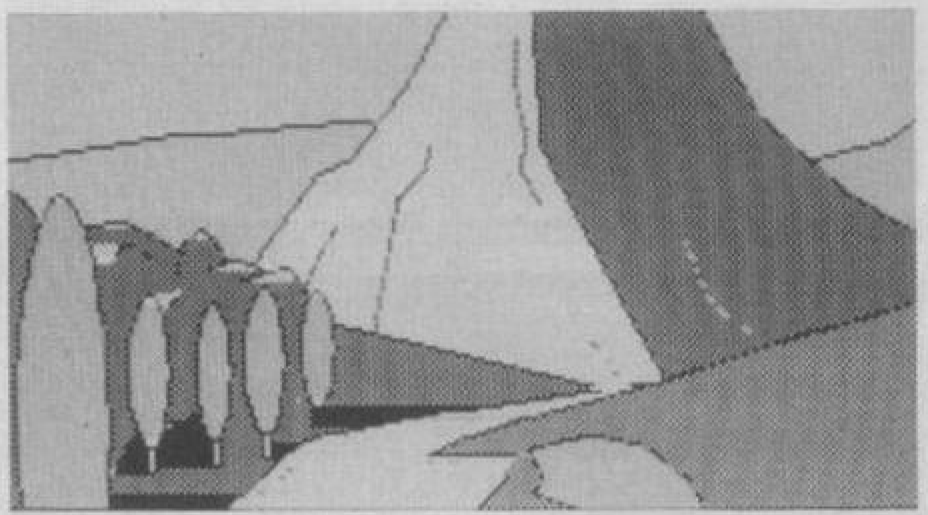
```
Farmhouse                                  50

You are standing at the end of a good road leading westwards into a forest.
There is a farmhouse to the north. To the east is an open field and to the
south is a slight depression.
:n
You are in the hallway of a disused farmhouse. A doorway leads northwest to a
disused store room. All the other doorways are securely boarded up. Outside is
a road going to the west.
There is a brass lamp on the ground. It is off.
There is an aerosol can of spray paint close at hand.
There is a bunch of keys here.
There is an empty bottle nearby.
:get all
Brass lamp taken
Aerosol can of spray paint taken
Bunch of keys taken
Bottle taken
:█
```

both respectable given the age of the product and make for very easy interaction. If the program really doesn't have a clue at what you're getting at, it does its best to ask for an explanation. One of the more interesting features of this game however is its Help facility. The game comes with a list of numbered problems. When you reach one of these problems and cannot discover the solution, the game offers a way out. Typing help prompts the computer to ask for the problem number. When this is entered, a hint appears. Depending on the complexity of the solution, several hints may be offered for a problem but they are only shown one at a time, when you ask for them. Finally, the program always warns you when the final solution is about to be presented.

This feature is handled so well that it makes the game an excellent choice for those unfamiliar with adventuring. The devious logic employed by most adventure authors can be analysed in detail and make the process of playing such games far more straightforward for the uninitiated.

Ultimately the game appeals at all levels. There are faults. The game crashed whenever I tried to enter a mineshaft for instance — and its not clear whether this bug has been fixed. For the most part however, the game ran smoothly. It may be too traditional for old hands but I think that this literate effort, coupled with something from the Infocom range would provide an excellent package for those Joyce owners looking for a new challenge once the sales ledger has been put away.

Atmosphere	78%
Plot	60%
Interaction	84%
Lastability	85%
Value for money	83%
Overall	80%



WRATH OF OLYMPUS

Alpha-Omega, £1.99, cassette

For those of you unaware of the circumstances, Alpha-Omega is CRL's budget label which means they're getting a fair amount of coverage this month. As might be expected for an adventure game in this price bracket, it appears Quilled, with a few graphic screens. The text is reasonably written and the graphics are adequate.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. Back in the days when legends lived, Aiolus, Lord of the Winds stole a golden apple from Lord Zeus. Once caught, he was punished by Zeus with the curse of forgetfulness and sent down to Earth. You play the part of the exiled Aiolus. Despite your unenviable predicament, there is hope. Legend has it (and we all know it has to be true) that somewhere in the Halls of Hades is the Pool of Rememberance. If you can find it and drink from it, you should be able to correct what you did wrong.

And so a plot is hatched. I've heard worse. What lets this game down is its lack of atmosphere. It's all very sterile. Wandering around derelict locations only to be told I'm wasting my time by examining things is not my idea of fun. Surprising as it may seem, I have better things to do with my time.

And there are problems with the interaction. Sometimes you want to pick things up and for no apparent reason you cannot. Locations seem badly laid out without good reason. I thought life in those times was exciting. Yawn.

It might well improve during the later stages but I'm afraid I met my match in a cave entrance. Couldn't get passed the bouncer. Guess I should have been wearing a tie. *Wrath of Olympus* is neatly packaged and presented and could reward perseverence but it didn't quite have the spark of *Seabase Delta* which I reviewed last issue. My advice is to leave this one alone.

Atmosphere	37%
Plot	48%
Interaction	47%
Lastability	50%
Value for money	44%
Overall	42%

NOCTURNE

Alpha-Omega, £1.99, cassette

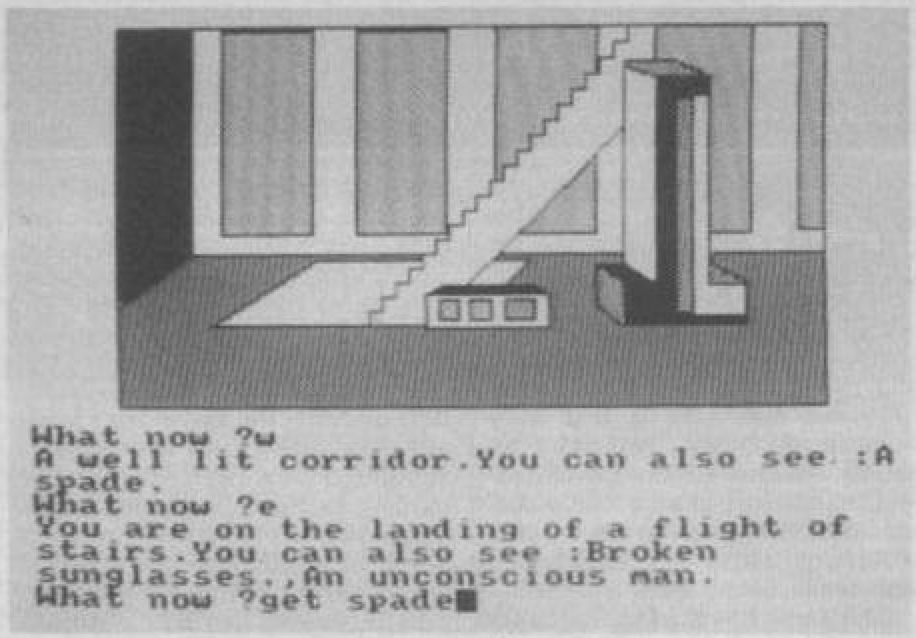
The title *Nocturne* conjures images of vampires, stakes and all the rest of the gothic horror features that were the staple diet of cinema goers only twenty years ago. Not so, however. The author, C Sharp, who is also responsible for the abortive *Wrath of Olympus* has used this title on a fully fledged SF adventure game. Horror of horrors!

You were walking home late one night when something interrupted the tired monotony of your day. You were kidnapped by illegal aliens — not the ones Genesis sing about — the ant-like ones. Ant-like ones? Yeah, the ones in the spaceship. They knocked you out, dumped you in their cargo chamber and that's where you awake, beginning the adventure. Wow, looks like Mr Sharp comes from the superbrief school of plot writing.

But before you dismiss this game through its total absence of introduction, *Nocturne* has a lot more to offer than *WOY*. At first this would not appear to be the case. This cargo hold you start the game in is more like a cell (or a room in some Adventure International game) than anything else I've come across. Four walls, ceiling, floor and a door — and that's your lot. Hit, kick, scream, feel, sleep, wait, punch, stab, suck, jump, wlak, exit, open, examine — everything was tried but to no avail. I phoned the company.

'Bash Wall,' they said.

Bash Wall? BASH WALL???!!!!! Well actually it works. But that is no excuse. Quilled games have their limitations but surely ceating a synonym with Hit or Smash



```
What now ?w
A well lit corridor.You can also see :A
spade.
What now ?e
You are on the landing of a flight of
stairs.You can also see :Broken
sunglasses.,An unconscious man.
What now ?get spade█
```

would not have been too difficult. Apart from the fact that only having one word when others could be applicable is extremely silly and unfair, I wonder at the IQ of anyone who chooses Bash against another, more commonly used word by those members of the population who have left nursery school. I stopped reading the Beano fifteen years ago under the impression that it could no longer offer any inspiration. Evidently I was wrong.

Okay you bash the wall and things begin to happen. This is where the game really starts to take off (well, it couldn't get any worse). After dealing with a guard, you are fairly free to wan-

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der much of the ship as you please. There are all manner of objects to be found, some familiar, others not so obvious. The ship itself is full of surprises for the unwary and the more you explore, the more menacing your unseen adversaries seem to be.

A menagerie of human life best sums up what I've seen of the ship so far. Magpies to mongeese — and you of course have all been left unguarded in the vessel. There is even a self contained desert, its purpose unkown.

Now this is better. The graphics are competent and interesting. The descriptions are short but neat and you can only wonder at the fact that this man also wrote *Wrath of Olympus* and think perhaps there must have been some divine inspiration involved here. I admit to having failed to solve it in the time available — not because I met any specific problem but I wandered around too much.

This game is far from being a classic in any catagory. However, for the asking price it appears to be worth it, despite the inexcusably bad beginning. It has restored my faith in both Mr Sharp and Alpha-Omega's ability to turn out respectable budget adventures. Not bad at all.

Atmosphere	77%
Plot	34%
Interaction	62%
Lastability	64%
Value for money	67%
Overall	68%

QOR

Maltdale, £5.50 cassette, £10.50 disk

QOR
MALTdaLE

Jo is a SUCer. An agent of the SUPREME UNIVERSES COMMAND, that is. This game is all about his exploits on the planet Qor. *QOR* is a mixed graphic and text adventure written by Steve Baker with Incentive's *GAC*. Somewhat irrelevantly, I feel that Mr Baker may be a *Traveller* player. Or perhaps he reads the same material that inspires those involved with that ageing RPG. Whatever the inspiration, *QOR* has an above average plot line which should appeal to those fans of hard core SF.

The background then requires an explanation of the history of the planet Qor, or Ra as it used to be known. Ra's ruling class was formed from a detached aristocracy who ruled over a plethora of peasants within a series of Balkanised states. These states were geographically and socially punctuated by the existence of isolated groups of magicians. Qor emerged when nomadic space pirates finally chose to settle on the planet, forming an alliance with the aristocracy. The peasants grinned and the magicians disappeared.

One generation later and the new breed of Qor based space pirates have been busy buying arms for a large computer complex on the planet. Itchy fingers? Well, nobody's too sure but the people at SUC want an end to the situation. Subtly, they decide to blow up the computer installation. All they need now is a way to get Jo onto the planet in a Qor craft so that the mission may be carried out.

Enter interstellar guy with a grudge, Zaucu. Zaucu was a member of this planet's unsavoury breed of nobility. His palace was destroyed by Ueev the pirate and his minions. Reasons for this are not too clear but straight afterwards mUeev moved into the deserted City Of Magicians. Right now this despicable person is off world, attempting to acquire extra equipment for his men. This pressures Zaucu to make a timely re-appearance. SUC manage to make the unlikely arrangement that Jo can be used as an intelligent muscle. A ticket to ride, perhaps, but where are the repatriation bonds, eh Mr Baker?

Unfortunately, this plot is about the best feature of the game. Arbitrarily complex it may be but it does pack a lot of atmosphere into a few paragraphs. The rest of the game is filled with spartan and often awkwardly surreal dialogue 'complimented' by graphics of varying quality. Some of the graphics are well drawn and self explanatory while others attempt to make crude allusions to irrelevant subjects through the process of implication. Yes I spotted the phallic symbolism and if it wasn't intentional, then I can only suggest the author's subconscience should be put on a leash. Most top shelf magazines have more clarity, colour and have the added advantage of being cheaper.

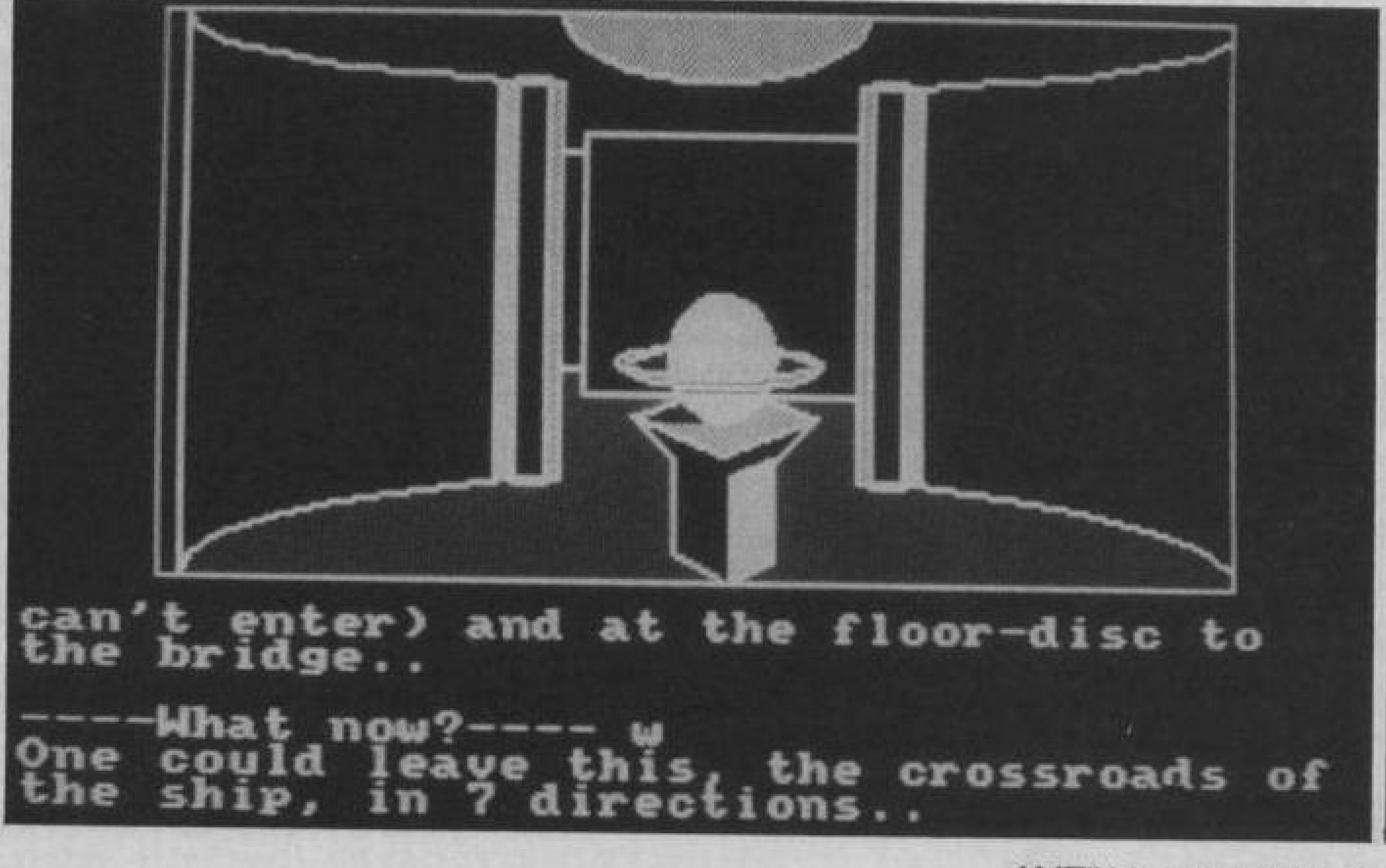
The game is too glib by far, hence my frustration with this review. It could have been brilliant and almost is. Avant garde music isn't what I'm looking for on an Amstrad (I have an embarrassingly large collection of old Pink Floyd albums to satisfy my needs). Even so, the 'music' combined with the original and somehow compelling opening sequence manage to convey a sense of better things to come. This expectation is not fulfilled.

The Jo-jokes are so bad, you can let them pass without too much nausea but the futuristic 'rap' used to present most of the text stinks of self-indulgence and is quite off putting. A matter of taste, I agree, but annoying to most, I imagine.

Maltdale were kind enough to send me the full solution (one thing this game possesses is size) and the ending is one of the most unusual, unsatisfying and yet curiously appealing I have ever encountered. I would like to see another game by Maltdale and Steve Baker for all my criticism. Maltdale appear to like new ideas and approaches while Mr Baker is no fool and has more than a modicum of imagination. However, it would be better if the consumer had a little less ego thrust down his throat and more fun. No doubt none of what I say will prevent *QOR* from achieving cult status. That's fine.

The game is available from Maltdale Software Ltd, PO Box 292, London, SW11 6BH.

Atmosphere	89%
Plot	90%
Interaction	66%
Lastability	72%
Value for money	63%
Overall	64%



```
can't enter) and at the floor-disc to
the bridge..

----What now?---- w
One could leave this, the crossroads of
the ship, in 7 directions..
```

THE LOST PHIRIOUS PART TWO: THE PLANETS

Vidipix, £2.50, cassette

Second part in the *Lost Phirious* quadrilogy has finally arrived from Vidipix. A lot of fun it turned out to be as well. Playable as an adventure in its own right, this particular Quilled effort begins on the planet Earth (the destination made an objective in the first game). This is more of an information gathering exercise than anything else. You're still on the trail of that elusive lost vessel, the Phirious. You need to get information and transportation for the next stage of your adventure.

Let's get one thing straight right now. The more I play these Vidipix adventures, the more I enjoy them. The consistency and and continuity of these adventures is superb. At the same time, they work excellently as stand alone games. A rarity if ever there was.

The sense of humour so evident in the first game has not been lost here, the author still taking advantage of any opportunity to place his tongue firmly in his cheek with every response. No longer are you referred to as an old goose gog but this rather unusual terminology is replaced by such affectionate terms as 'Mulberry Bush'. More importantly, the terminology used conveys a deceptively friendly atmosphere to the player and adds greatly to the simple enjoyment of playing the game. There are a few let downs. Too often the game responds with the bland statement that nothing interesting is gleaned when the player examines something. Most of the replies or prompts are more interesting however.

The game itself involves using teleports to travel across the solar system in the quest to gain the necessary equipment and information needed to continue your quest. On your way, you encounter a humbled but hungry service droid who can make a useful ally if fed, a disassembled Amstrad 664 which may appear to create more problems than its worth but is invaluable if progress is to be made.

THE LOST PHIRIOUS
Part 2:
The Planets

The Lost Phirious is a real boon for Amster Adventurers in that it's cheap, well written and thought out and playable by beginners and experts alike. A couple of the solutions to problems depend on very corny jokes but they're so bad they work. apart from that, the only gripe I have is that the Help sheet sent with the adventure told a couple of fibs — through error rather than a sense of fun, I suspect.

Anyway, as with its predecessor, the game makes use of a multi-load format to make up for as many shortcomings as possible and is a pure text offering once more. A note in the instructions mentions that part three of the series will be written with *GAC* but will retain the text format of the original. I hope that this means Vidipix will take advantage of the more sophisticated parser *GAC* has to offer. They can hardly lose out if they do this in conjunction with a multi-load game. In the meantime, consider this another respectable and enjoyable effort which won't rob you of too many pennies.

Atmosphere	**78%**
Interaction	**65%**
Lastability	**68%**
Value for money	**73%**
Overall	**74%**

HUNCHBACK — THE ADVENTURE

Ocean, £9.95, cassette, £14.95 disk

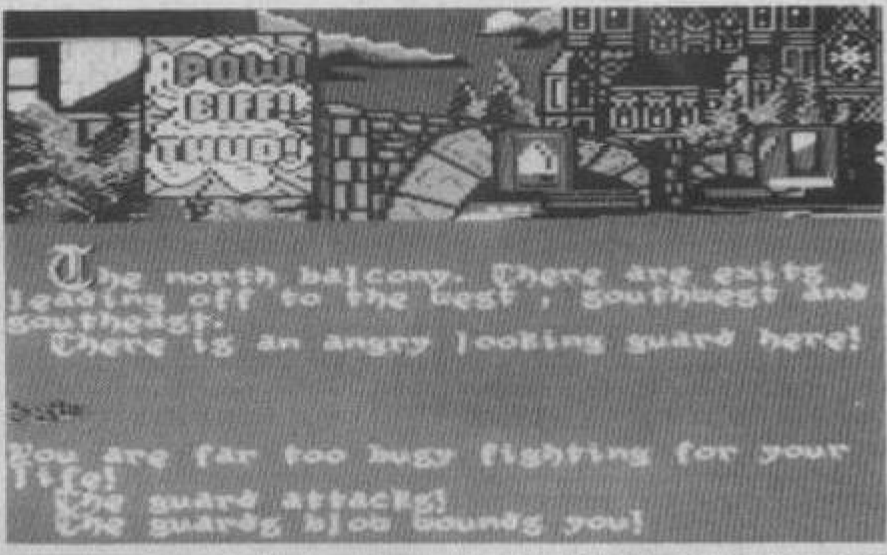
Quasimodo is back. No longer in animated form though, as this latest game from Ocean must be the first to take a character from a famous arcade game and write and adventure around him. The game uses a multi-load format and presentation style both similar to those introduced in *The Never Ending Story* (reviewed back in issue two). The result is, unfortunately, a dire game but one that should rank amongst the prettiest of Amstrad adventures.

Loading the program is a joy in itself. Once the main program has loaded, complete with its colourful title screen, a pleasing theme tune bursts into life to compliment the credits. Unfortunately, unless you just want to sit there, listening to this little three-voice ditty, you have to end it abruptly to allow the first section of the game to load. The result is a long winded process that isn't worth the effort.

The game proper has a very attractive display. The top third of the screen is taken up with a superbly drawn scene with an inset on the left hand side to display a close up of the main character or event. If an object is picked up, an image of it appears in a smaller inset to the right of the picture. Up to six objects may be displayed at once (but no more than this as only six objects may be carried at any one time).

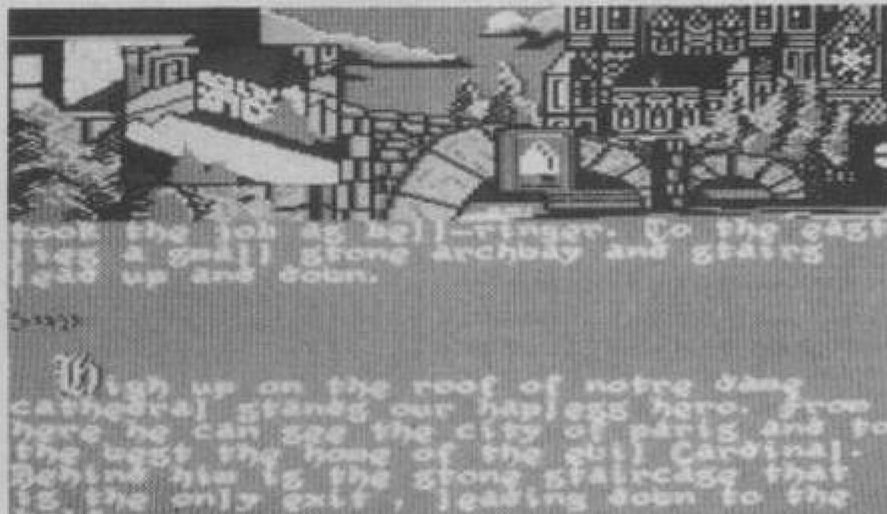
Below this graphic area, a two-colour redifined character set scrolls up to describe the locations and, of course, respond to any input the player may wish to make. These responses must be improved if Ocean expect their adventure games to be taken seriously. The limitations of the parser make it evident that Ocean simply want the game to look nice but care little about what a player actually wants from a game. Multi-part commands are quite possible with only the simplest punctuation and syntax but the variety of commands is severely limited.

You cannot, for instance, examine things! It doesn't give the bland response, 'You find nothing unusual,' but 'I don't understand examine.' Ocean's argument would probably be that you don't need the word. Anything worth picking up can actually be *seen* on the screen. I don't suppose it's worth pointing out that to thousands of adventure game addicts, it's actually **fun** to examine things. No, that would be asking too much.



The north balcony. There are exits leading off to the west, southwest and southeast.
There is an angry looking guard here!

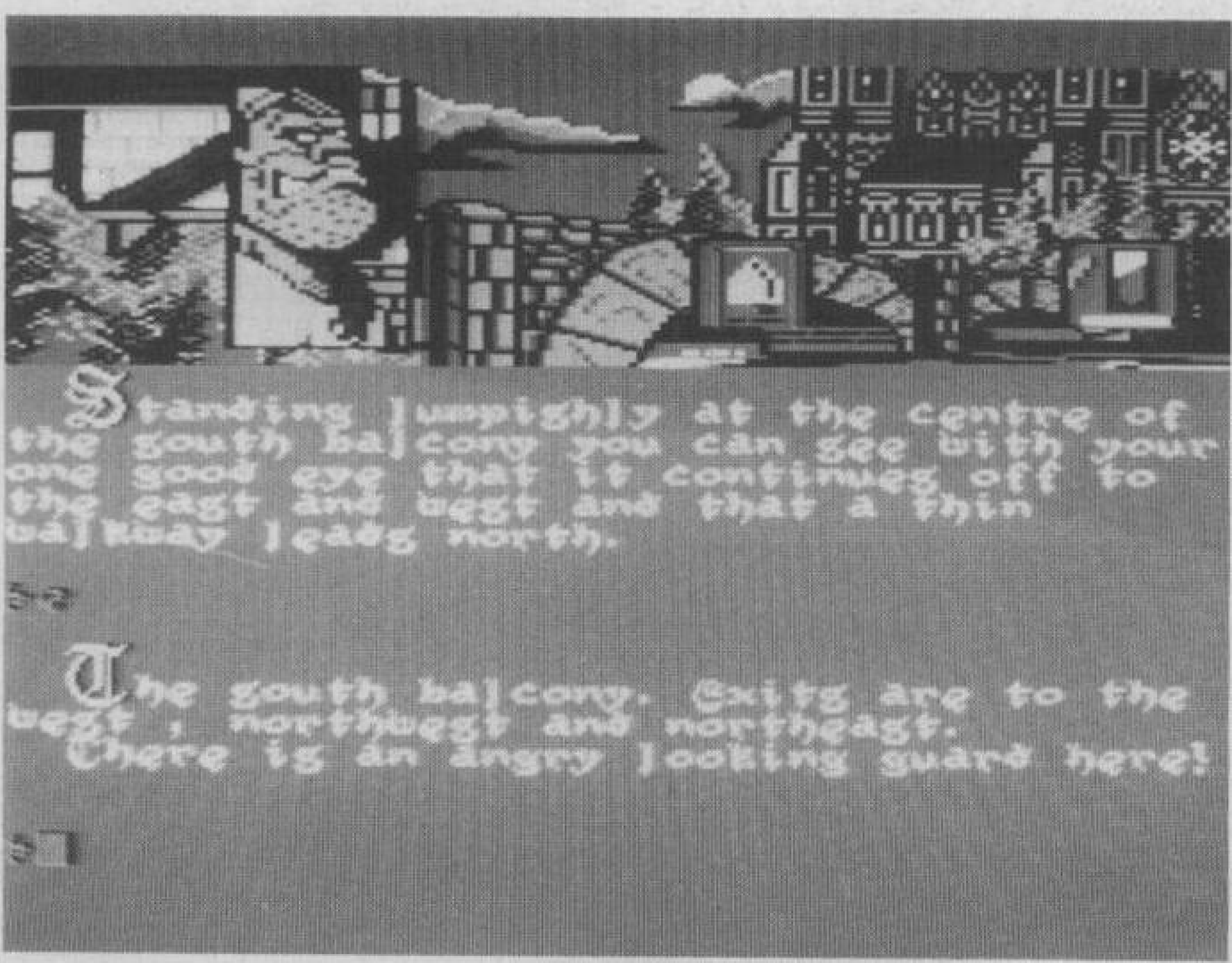
You are far too busy fighting for your life!
The guard attacks!
The guards blow wounds you!



took the job as bell-ringer. To the east lies a small stone archway and stairs lead up and down.

High up on the roof of notre dame cathedral stands our hapless hero. From here he can see the city of paris and to the west the home of the evil Cardinal. Behind him is the stone staircase that is the only exit, leading down to the belfry.

The plot (something that Ocean realised adventurers would appreciate) is that girlie idol Esmeralda (also the source of many unprintable jokes) has been kidnapped by Cardinal and his spineless lackeys. You, as Quasimodo, have to get passed the guards surrounding Notre



Standing lumpishly at the centre of the south balcony you can see with your one good eye that it continues off to the east and west and that a thin walkway leads north.

The south balcony. Exits are to the west, northwest and northeast.
There is an angry looking guard here!

Dame and rescue her. Not surprisingly you take the risk of getting biffed a few times along the way but all this can be offset by watching the beautiful scenery.

This may sound cruel but I hated the game. There was little incentive to play except to see what wonders the graphic artist had managed to come up with. As an adventure, it's a waste of time, space and money. I'm not criticising Ocean's ability to program. They have proven themselves time and time again in arcade game programs. I do feel that they haven't a clue about what makes a good adventure. If only they put as much effort into the presentation as they did with the content, they might even produce some classics.

For the same amount of money as it would cost you to get your grubby paws on a copy of this game, you could easily pick up about four cheap but good Quilled adventures. And that's exactly what I suggest you do.

Atmosphere	32%
Plot	31%
Interaction	58%
Lastability	39%
Value for money	29%
Overall	30%

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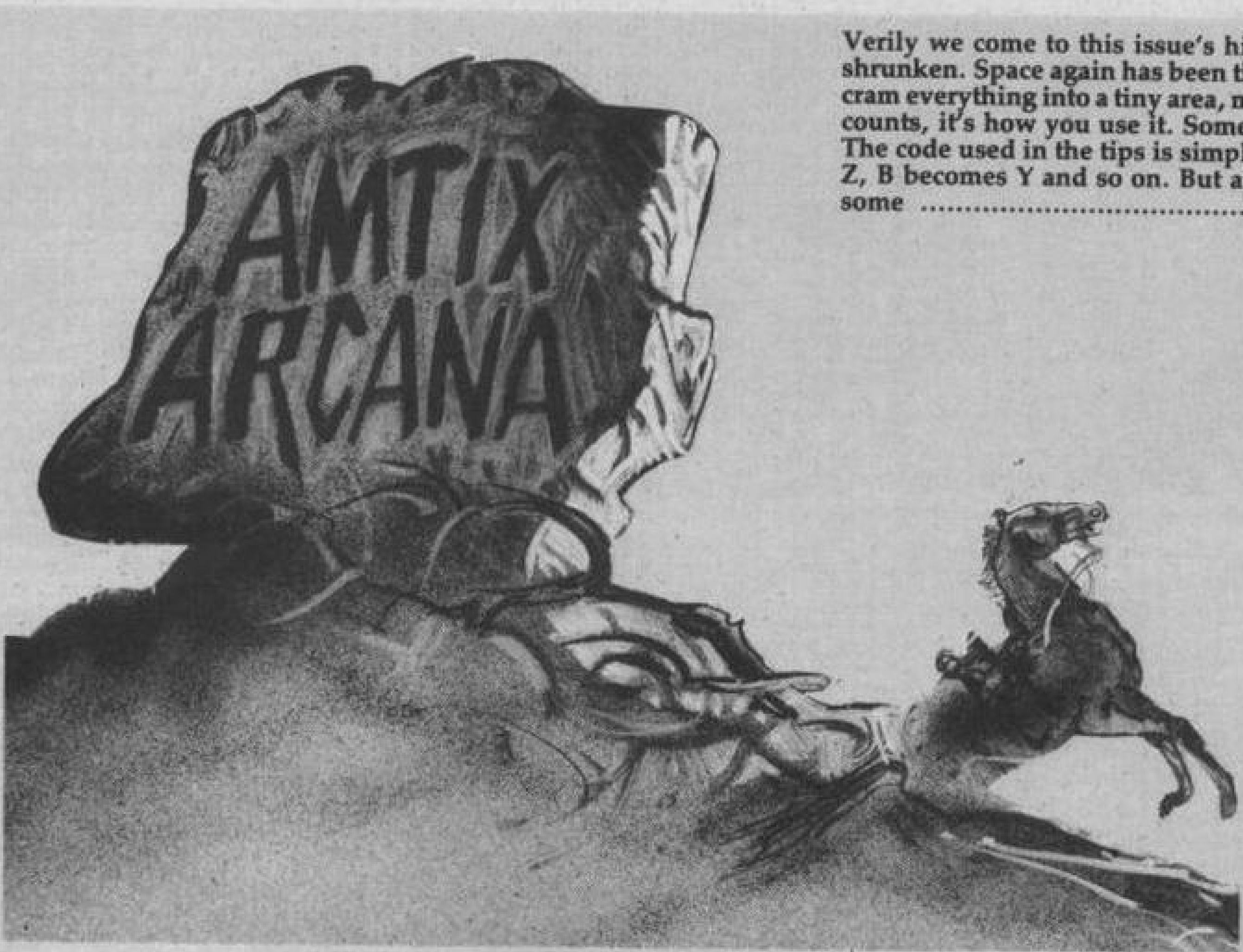
Verily we come to this issue's high spot, the Arcana is here. Albeit shrunken. Space again has been the culprit which means we've had to cram everything into a tiny area, maps and all. Still it's not the size that counts, it's how you use it. Something different for you this month. The code used in the tips is simply a reversed alphabet so A becomes Z, B becomes Y and so on. But apart from the tips and maps there's some ……………………………………………………………

HOMEGROWN ADVENTURES

Theseus parts I and II were sent to me this month by Anthony Collins from Birmingham. Together they deal with the adventures of the Greek hero, Theseus during his adult life. The game was written with *GAC* and takes advantages of both the excellent graphic and interpretative features of that utility.

The game is too massive to deal with in detail but believe me, it's excellent. The author was also thoughtful enough to send some detailed and well presented documentation to help make my life easier. I have no doubts as to the amount of care and hard work the author put into this game and the result is a well-worthwhile, professional game.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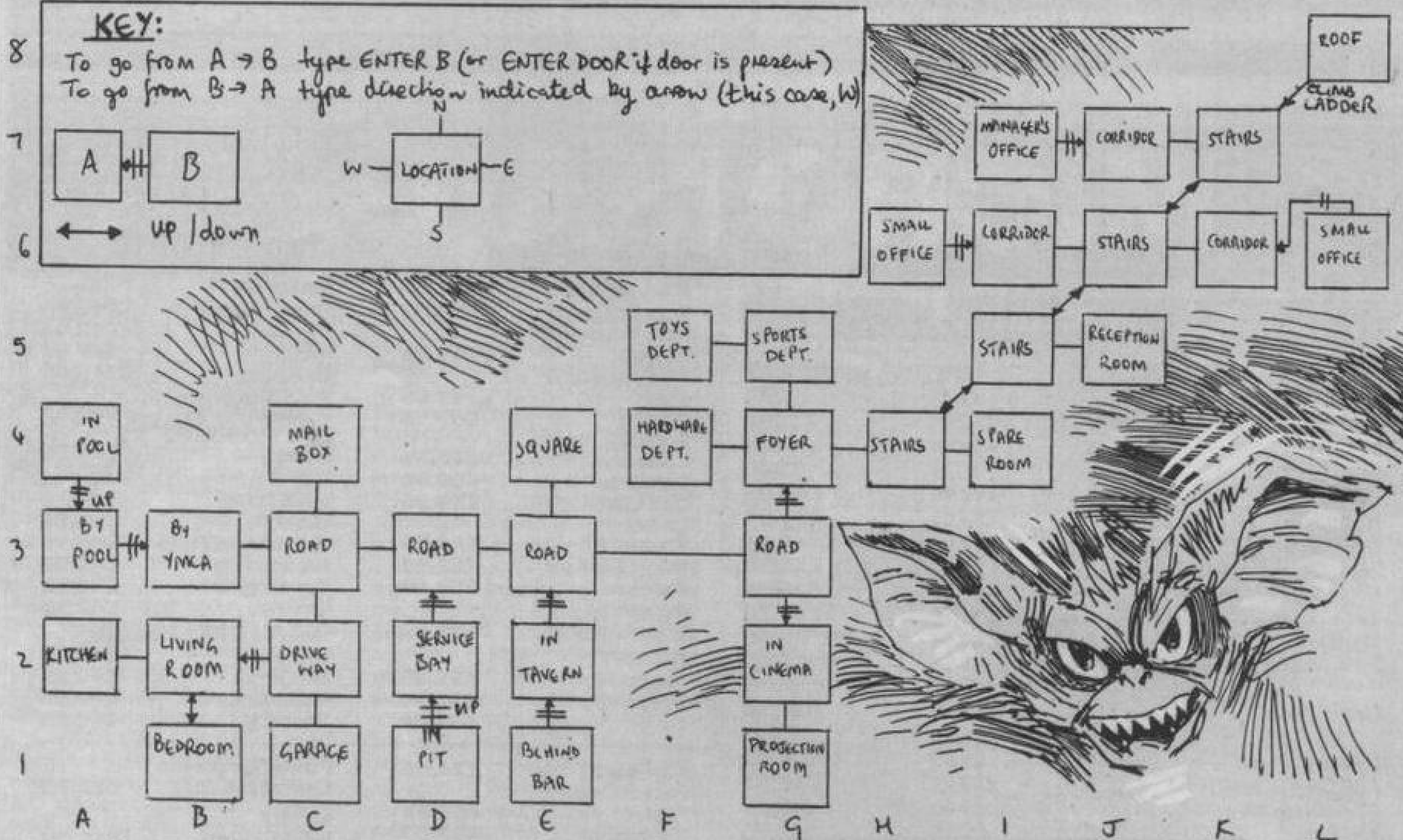
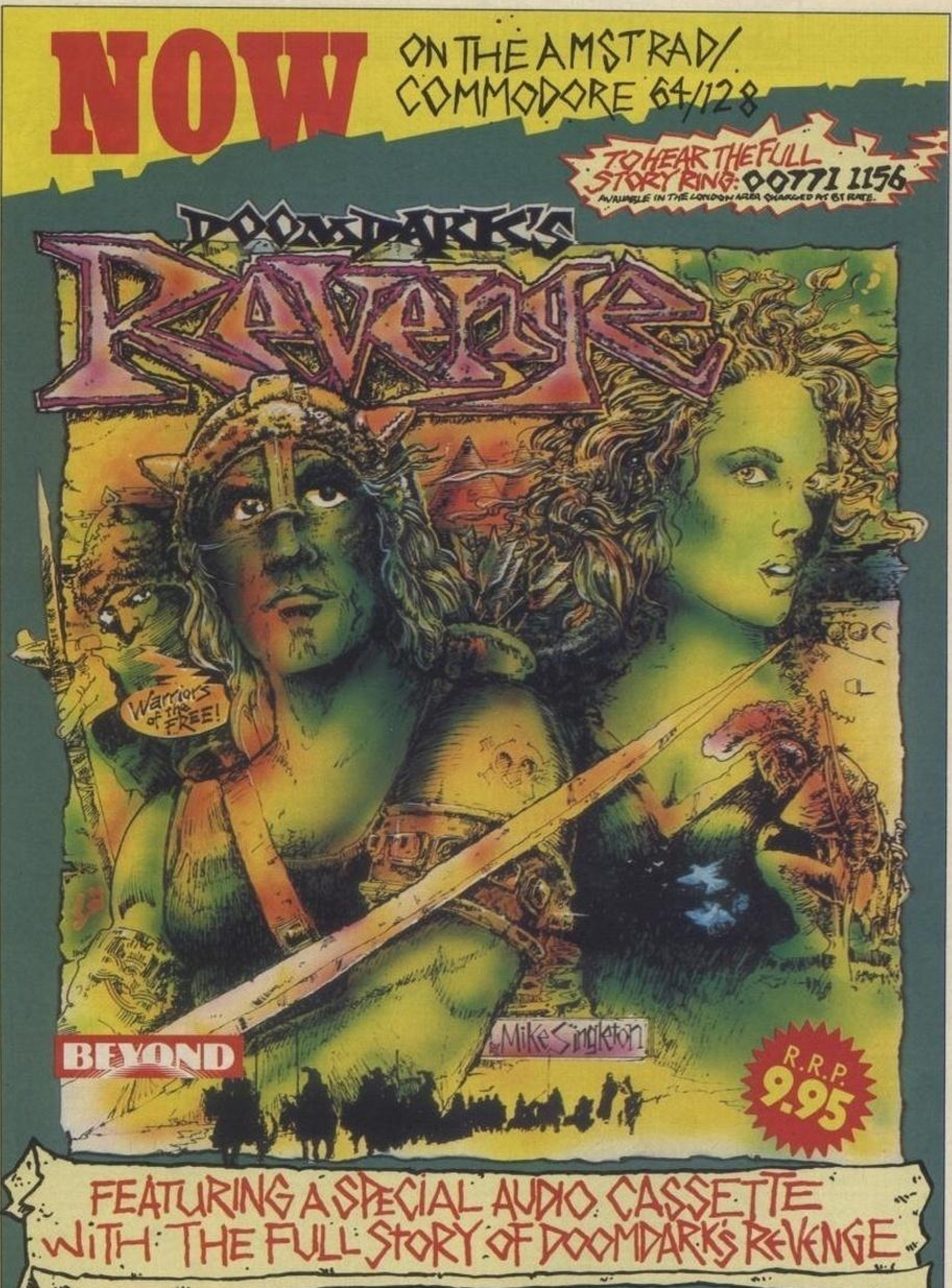

KEY:
To go from A → B type ENTER B (or ENTER DOOR if door is present)
To go from B → A type direction indicated by arrow (this case, W)
A
B
N
W
LOCATION
E
S
↔ up/down
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
A
B
C
D
E
F
G
H
I
J
K
L
ROOF
CLIMB LADDER
MANAGER'S OFFICE
CORRIDOR
STAIRS
SMALL OFFICE
CORRIDOR
STAIRS
CORRIDOR
SMALL OFFICE
TOYS DEPT.
SPORTS DEPT.
STAIRS
RECEPTION ROOM
IN POOL
MAIL BOX
SQUARE
HARDWARE DEPT.
FOYER
STAIRS
SPARE ROOM
UP
BY POOL
BY YMCA
ROAD
ROAD
ROAD
ROAD
KITCHEN
LIVING ROOM
DRIVE WAY
SERVICE BAY
IN TAVERN
IN CINEMA
UP
BEDROOM
GARAGE
PIT
BEHIND BAR
PROJECTION ROOM

LOCATION OF OBJECTS:

PODS, SCRAPS, FLASHLIGHT	B1	PROJECTOR	G1
TREE, REMOTE, SWORD	B2	MOGWAI (IN CHUTE),	
LADDER, SNOWPLOUGH	C1	KNIFE & SPARK	
MAIL BOX, STRIPE	C4	KNITER (IN DRAWER)	A2
WELDING TORCH, BOTTLE	D1	CAMERA, PLASTIC PIPE	E1
POOL, DRAIN PLUG	A4	DRILL, HACKSAW, JOINTING TAPE (ON COUNTER)	F4

GREMLINS the MAP

BY MIKE WONG



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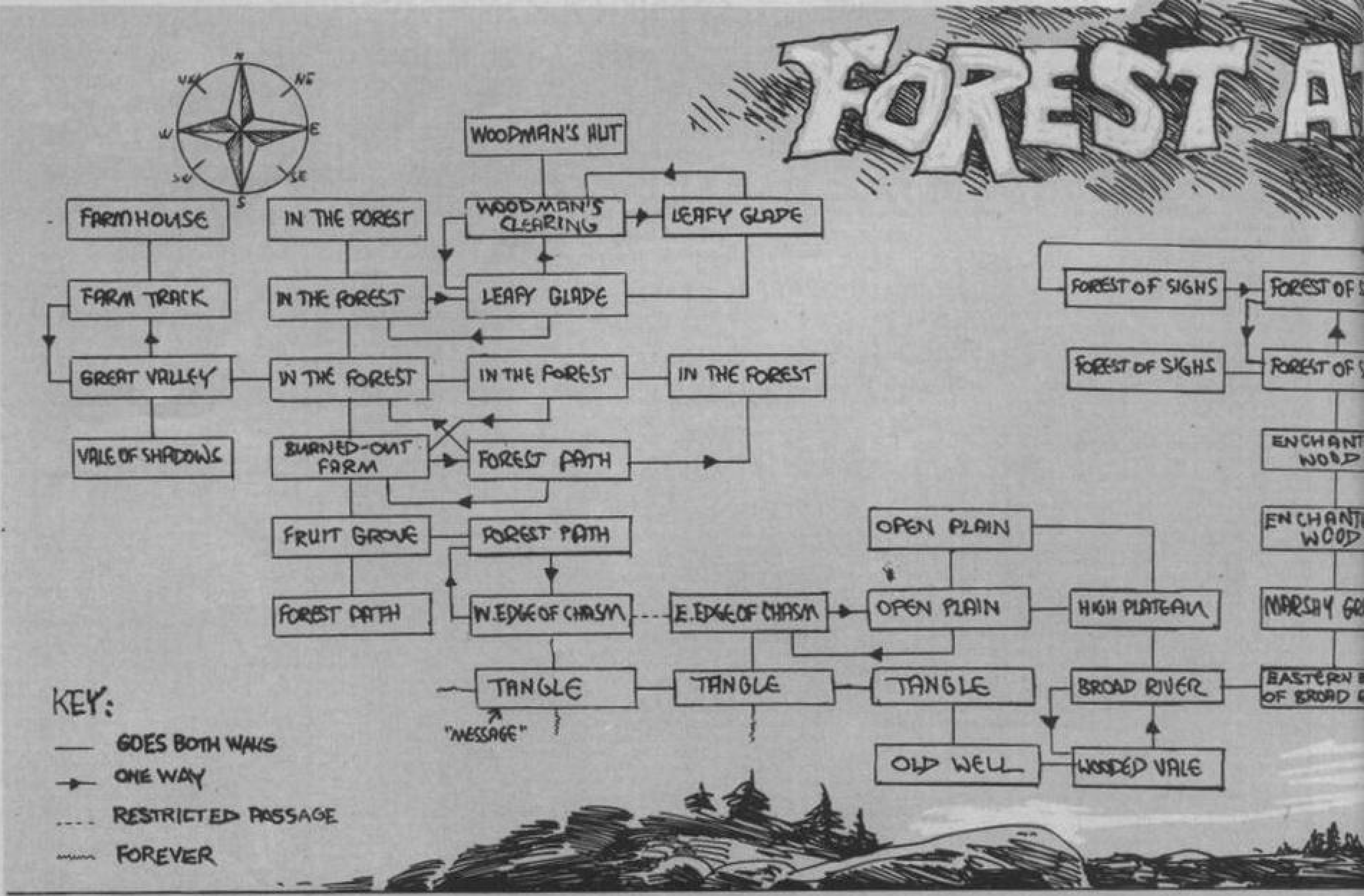

FOREST A
N
NE
E
SE
S
SW
W
NW
WOODMAN'S HUT
FARMHOUSE
IN THE FOREST
WOODMAN'S CLEARING
LEAFY GLADE
FARM TRACK
IN THE FOREST
LEAFY GLADE
GREAT VALLEY
IN THE FOREST
IN THE FOREST
IN THE FOREST
VALE OF SHADOWS
BURNED-OUT FARM
FOREST PATH
FRUIT GROVE
FOREST PATH
FOREST PATH
W.EDGE OF CHASM
E.EDGE OF CHASM
OPEN PLAIN
OPEN PLAIN
HIGH PLATEAU
TANGLE
TANGLE
TANGLE
"MESSAGE"
OLD WELL
BROAD RIVER
WOODED VALE
FOREST OF SIGHS
FOREST OF SIGHS
ENCHANTED WOOD
ENCHANTED WOOD
MARSHY GR
EASTERN OF BROAD
KEY:
GOES BOTH WAYS
ONE WAY
RESTRICTED PASSAGE
FOREVER

Mr Collins wants to start an adventure club with a difference. He wants people to send him original storylines and ideas so that he may translate them into GACked adventures. But he wants more than a paragraph worth of thoughts. The ideas should be well fleshed out if they are to be of real use. Above that, the amount of development work carried out is up to the person sending in the material — but the more the better.

In return, each member would receive a copy of his own game (implemented by Mr Collins) free. Games by other members could be obtained for £1.50 or £1.00 if a blank cassette is sent in. Mr Collins would also try to get each game reviewed and even tempt software houses to examine them. Should his efforts be successful, Mr Collins would make a deal whereby he cllects 50% of the profits (the other 50% going to the intellectual author).

The idea is enterprising to say the least. It's also rewarding to see enthusiasm from someone as capable as Mr Collins (his own work was very good indeed). However, I have some doubts about the viability of this scheme. If response was good enough, Mr Collins would certainly have his work cut out for him. Whether he could make the quality of these acquired games as good as *Theseus* must be debatable. And the success of his scheme also depends on how many people already have access to *GAC*. Evidently, a great deal of care and work will be required from anyone interested but I do wish Mr Collins and anyone who takes part in his scheme a lot of luck. Anthony Collins can be reached at 17, Larch House, 37 Shawsdale Road, Bromford, Birmingham, B36 8DG.

John E Betteridge can almost call himself a local man, coming from Telford, not a million miles away from this very keyboard. He sent me two GACked adventures, one with graphics and one without. Again, both were sent in with useful notes (and full maps in this case) and the adventures were sent on disk (never something to be scoffed at with our deadlines).

First things first, the title of the graphic assisted game is *Escape from Koshima* and uses the almost totally ignored subject of the Second World War to put you in the role of a prisoner in a Japanese camp. Your aim is to escape. This involves negotiating difficulties within the camp and finding a means to get through the dense jungle that surrounds it.

Some of the graphics are on the primitive side but much of the jungle scenery and the title screen itself are respectable. A couple of silly messages appeared (one of which asked me which door I was going through, listing a choice of directions when there was only one door ahead of me) but by and large, the game was well coded, reasonably atmospheric and intricate despite a few niggling responses.

Mr Betteridge's second game, *Guardian* is brimming over with imagination and subtelty. The title refers to the Guardian of a pact between the forces of Good and Evil. The pact allows free passage to Heaven or Hell for each soul departing the living world depending on the judgement given it. However, the pact has been broken by the forces of evil who have forced a soul destined for Heaven into the firery depths of Hell. You have to follow him and get him out and back up to Heaven before an all consuming war breaks out between Good and Evil.

This game works a lot better than *Escape*. It's perhaps more traditional in content but still remarkably intriguing in many respects. If the games have one particular fault common to both, it must be in the slightly limited vocabulary. However, this gripe is offset by the integrity and consistency (not to mention originality) also common to both. John Betteridge can be contacted at 39 Deercote, Hollinswood, Telford, Shropshire.

Hopefully, there will be more homegrown material to look at next month. Incidentally, anyone who wants their games returned will have their wish granted so long as they take the time to include a stamped addressed envelope.

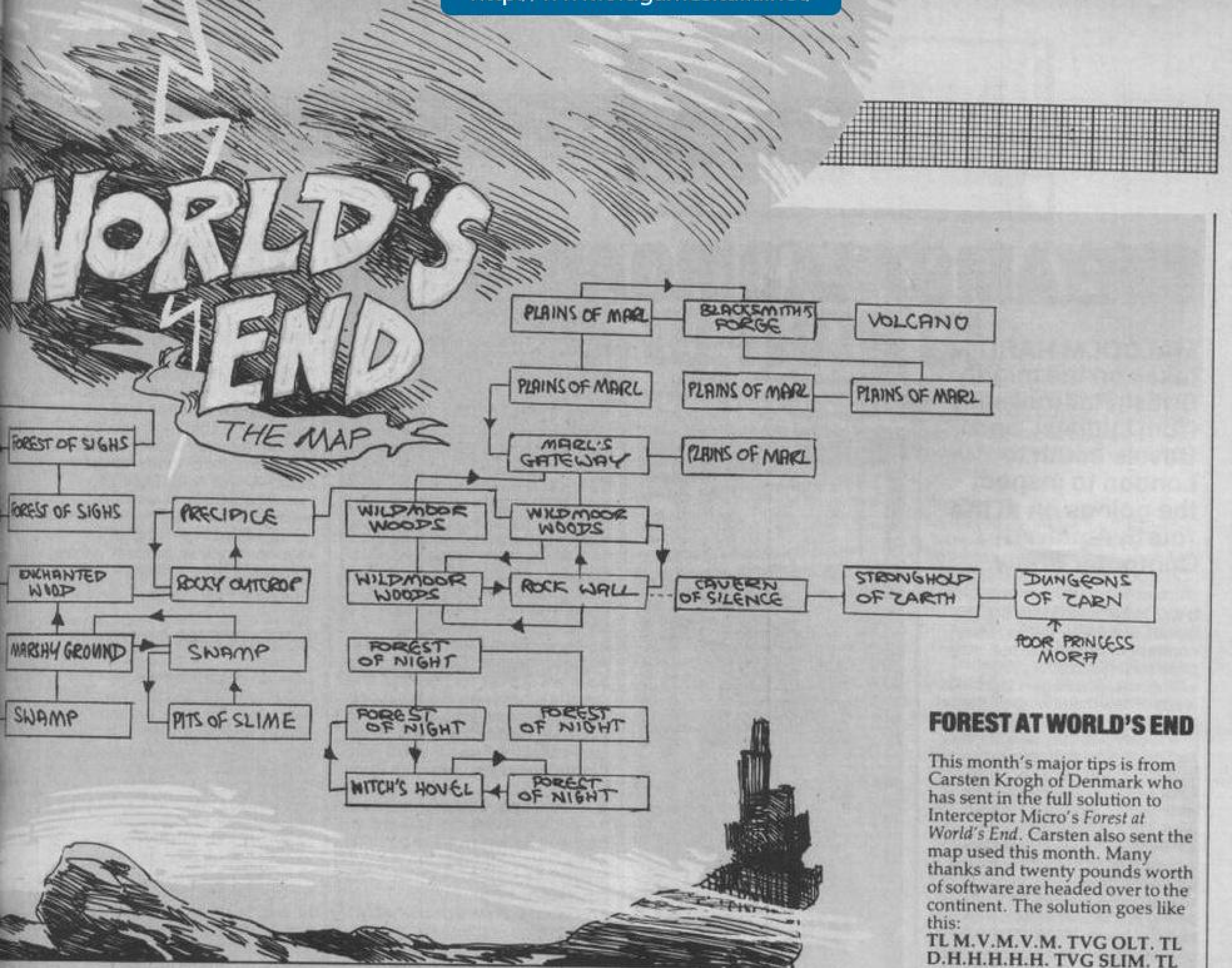
LETTERS

INVISIBLE INFOCOM

Dear SM,
I am writing to ask a simple question. Where on Earth can I get Infocom Adventures from. I'm especially keen on getting *Planetfall* and *Seastalker* but your mail order department doesn't do them. By the way, my friend says your *Hitch-Hikers* tips don't work, especially 'type GSLF.'
Mr G Ross, Benson, Oxford

As Activision now control Infocom, getting in touch with them should bring your quest to an end. There are apparently versions of Hitch-Hikers *where the word that has to be typed into the keyboard is semi-randomly selected. To avoid any confusion, VMQLB KLVGIB when taken to the Vogon Captain. The word you need is the third word from the first line of the second verse.*

As to my other tips not working, I did make an error a couple of months back when dealing with the Improbability Drive hook-up. However, I corrected this a month later. Apart from that, all my tips have been accurate.
SM



IDENTITY CRISIS

Dear Sean,
You claim not to be a leprechaun but you can be just as tricky and devious. I refer of course to a letter in your column from a certain Pat Winstanley of Wigan. He asked other *GAC* owners to get in touch with him. You went on to wish him lots of luck with the response to his letter. This was impossible of course because you neglected to publish his full address.

Is this your way of ensuring correspondence to yourself? I hope not. As a fellow owner of *GAC*, I would be obliged if you could now supply the full address. One useful tip for *Red Moon* before I go: To get passed any obstacle, simply type YFIB (name of obstacle) and it will disappear forever.
Gordon Yacomine, Dundee

Ah, caught out at last. Crime doesn't pay does it? My toadstool isn't very comfortable and sometimes I forget to add little details like readers' addresses. However, you are not infallible either because Pat Winstanley is a she and not a he. The address is 13, Hollington Way, Wigan, WN3 6LS.

While we're on the subject, Mrs Winstanley collaborates with one Mrs Sandra Sharkey to produce a fanzine called Adventure Probe and a jolly effort it is too. Tips on adventures, articles on how to write good games, contacts and notes on getting the best from GAC are the usual fare in the £1.00 a shot issues. If the offering from these two ladies lacks weight, it makes up for it in terms of quality. They also run an Adventure Exchange Service. Though this service is run with good intentions, I'm not certain as to its legality, copyright laws being what they are.

However, such efforts are valuable indeed. Most so called professionals (myself included) just don't have the time or space to deal with people's adventuring difficulties in the way that Pat or Sandra probably could. I'm sure that if anyone requires more details, an SAE to the address above will yield results.
SM

MAKE ROOM, MAKE ROOM

Dear Sean,
I have written several times to all three Newsfield magazines as I use all three micros. I have been offering the Zzap! 64 team (of which I believe you are a part) full help on a large number of adventures. Now I don't want any prizes (I have all I need, thanks). What I do offer is help — step by step or full solution to any of the games I have listed. For the price of a photocopy, I'll even run off a map or two for people. I've even finished *The Price of Magik*.

I will always help any adventurer who gets in touch (preferably by letter as my phone is usually busy with helpline services). If your readers want help, all you have to do is bring this to their notice instead of always asking why people don't write in, offering help.

Give old Whitey in Zzap! a nudge and tell him to open his mail. If you don't want help then you're doing your readers a disservice and getting paid for it.
John R Barnsley, 32, Herrivale Rd, Rising Brook, Stafford, Staffs, ST17 9EB. Tel: Stafford 56723.

While I'm always grateful for help and your list of around fifty games is about the biggest I've been sent (one reason why I can't print it), I'm not always asking people to write in. So many people have already sent in useful tips and maps, I'm having trouble deciding what to use and when. Your letter is appreciated and I'm sure many people wil benefit from the help you offer but the conceited tone of your letter is totally un-necessary.

I can also assure you that my bearded counterpart in Zzap! opens all his mail. He isn't stupid. You however, might just be. Many of the adventures in your list are not even available on the Amstrad. Perhaps we can help each other here. I can, if required, recommend high quality psychiatric care for both you and your ego.
SM

FOREST AT WORLD'S END

This month's major tips is from Carsten Krogh of Denmark who has sent in the full solution to Interceptor Micro's *Forest at World's End*. Carsten also sent the map used this month. Many thanks and twenty pounds worth of software are headed over to the continent. The solution goes like this:
TL M.V.M.V.M. TVG OLT. TL D.H.H.H.H.H. TVG SLIM. TL M.V.H. WILK OLT across cavern. **TL V.V.V.H.D.D. TVG ILKV. TL V.M. ILD** across river in the boat. **TL M.M.M.M.M.M.** At this point you will be attacked by wolves. After three attempts to move a woodnymph will appear and heal your wounds. **PRHH SVI** to say thanks. She will give you a **IRMT** to protect you from **GSV DRGXS**.

TL D.S.V.V.M. YOLD SLIM to get to the top of the precipice. **TL H.H.H.H. TVG PVB. TL D.M.M.M.M.V.M.M.V.F. GRV ILKV** to rock and lower the other end into **GSV ELOXZML. XORNY WLDM. TVG XSVHG. TL F.W.D. LKVM XSVHG** with the key. **TREV QVDVOH** to the blacksmith. To get the sword, **DVZI TOLEVH. TL H.H.D.H.V. GLFXS HGLMV**. Fight your way **V.V.V** with the sword (the only use for the bow is in **GSV DLLWH**). **PROO WVNLMH. TL GL WFMTVLMH. TL W. TVG KIRMXVHH NZIZ.**

To finish the adventure, **TL F.D.D.D.M.D. YOLD SLIM. D.D.D.H.H.H. ILD YLZG. M.D.H.D.D.D.M.M.D.** And that's it.

Thank you for your letters, games, zines and maps. Keep sending the stuff in though, it will be used sooner or later. Next month I should have tips for *Redhawk* with a little luck (better late than never). The address to write to is: **AMTIX! ARCANA, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1AQ.**

NEWS

THE AMSTRAD ROAD SHOW RETURNS

MALCOLM HARDING takes on the mighty British Rail (not easy from Ludlow), and travels south to London to inspect the goings on at the fourth Amstrad Computer Show.

It was hot, it was Friday the Thirteenth, and I was 'getting there' courtesy of British Rail but, surprise surprise, nothing went wrong, and once again there was loads of new material, even if most of it was for Joyce owners.

It is very sad that, despite the fact it was held in the capital, there was still a marked lack of interest from software companies with new games. **Audiogenic** was showing the Amstrad conversion of *Graham Gooch's Test Cricket* while **Alligata** invited punters to play *Meltdown*. Over on the **CDS** stand trade was lively for their best selling game *Steve Davis Snooker* and *Colossus Chess 40*. The *Price of Magik* generated a lot of interest on the **Level 9** stand while **Mikro-Gen** was doing brisk business with its latest offering *Equinox*.

On the **Mirrorsoft** stand customers were able to marvel at the exploits of *Biggles* and have a peep at the *Fleet Street Editor* for the CPC6128. A new name, **Maltdale** of London showed two new games *QOR* and *The Student*.

Of the 80 stands at the show at least a quarter of them had only recently climbed aboard the Amstrad bandwagon. More and more the Amstrad show is becoming dominated by serious software and hardware, particularly for the thin and fat sisters, the PCW8256 and the recently introduced PCW8512. Briefly I shall run through the various stands but in no order of preference.

Beckenham based, **Transform**, specialises in business software for the 6128 and 8256 and they were demonstrating *Masterfile*, *Mastercalc*, and *Draw*. **Caxton Software** had travelled across the city. As one of the leading publishers of business software they were showing off a host of accessories including *Cardbox*, an electronic card index; *Touch 'n Go*, the 24 hours to keyboard mastery program; *Brainstorm*, the world's first ideas processor; and *Scratch-Pad Plus*, the virtual memory spread sheet.

The similar sounding **Saxon Computing**, based on Humberside, showed would-be punters their database *Microfile*, formerly known as *Flexifile*. Together with *Microword* this is now an official Amstrad product configured to run on the Joyce and Fat Joyce and also the 6128. Also on show was *Flexilabel*, a powerful labelling program to print mail list labels or multiple copies of the same label; and *Cashbook Accounts*, accounting for cash retail businesses to VAT Scheme D.

k'tronic
k'tronic

ELECTRONIC GOODIES

Exciting developments in the area of electronic communications were provided by Stockport based **MicroLink**. The company's user friendly format provides access to features such as *WeatherLink* which enables you to download the latest weather satellite pictures to your micro and *FloraLink* where you can order flowers to be delivered anywhere in the United Kingdom.

On stand 21 **Loadplan** were offering Panasonic CF2 and CF2DD diskettes for the 8512 at a special discount price. The Dartford based **Load and Run** introduced Cavalier Software for PCW owners and showed off two new products, *Teleadd* and *Stock Control and Invoicing*. Grampian based **Grayfield**, are specialists in computer training and they run *Locoscript* word processing courses in London every Wednesday and Thursday. Courses are also held once a month in Birmingham, Bristol, Manchester and Glasgow.

The **Croydon Effective Education Association** offers training to give familiarity, understanding and confidence in computer use to business people and all courses include training in how to learn new technologies, practical experience and individual attention. **Minerva Systems** of Exeter offered a simple to use database for the Joyce and Fat Joyce for under £30! Next door London based **Connect Systems** demonstrated the latest version of *Money Manager*, a flexible management system for personal and small business use. Several book publishers had stands at the show including **Bernard Babani**, Glentop Publishing **Sunshine Books**, **Sigma Books** and **Phoenix Publishing**.

Educational material was not overlooked, either, for **LCL Educational Software** was showing off its first product for the PCW entitled *Micro Maths*. **Cirkit** unveiled its long awaited enhanced software package for the Amstrad Prestel Link. It provides not only telesoftware downloading facility and text dump, but many other improvements such as off-line editing of Prestel frames, user-defined function keys, and the option to configure to other modems all for just £19.95 on disk.

Electric Studio had a light pen and graphics program for the 8512 and 8256 as well as several new programs for the CPC micros including *Music Box* and *Multi Text*. One of the biggest stands at the show was taken by **New Star Software** who, it is fair to say, have been one of the leading forces in producing realistically priced software for the Amstrads. If you want to transport your Joyce from home to office or to site visits then stand 46 was your destination. Here **Vidix Case** of London were selling a *Vidix Transporter* which holds everything — monitor, keyboard, printer, modem, cables, manuals and even disks — yet costs just £21.75.

ACCOUNTING PACKAGE

Dorking based **Compact Software** unveiled two special products, *Daybook*, an entry level accounting package for the first time Joyce and Fat Joyce user, and *Compact Accounts*, which includes sales, purchase and nominal ledgers and sales invoicing. **Sandpiper Software** of Clwyd, North Wales, specialises in writing business software and database management systems for the Amstrad PCW series and unveiled *Sandpiper File Manager*. Nearby **Sagesoft** was showing off its full range of accounting and payroll programs including *Retrieve*, *Magic Filer*, and *Chit-Chat* which this year won the British Microcomputing Awards Trophy for the best Communication Software.

Timatic Systems of Fareham specialises in Amstrad peripherals and released several new products including a five and a quarter inch 1 megabyte disk for the 6128 and 8256 with the ability to read/

THE PRICE OF MA K
£9.95
A FREE 'PRICE OF MAGIK' POSTER
WHICH LEVEL ARE YOU AT

O LONDON

write MS/PC DOS, and a 10 megabyte hard disk for the 8256. **Grafsales** from Watford introduced the first digitiser/graphics/CAD tablet for the Joyce and Fat Joyce. This represents a highly powerful and unprecedented toll for CAD/ Engineering work. Manchester's **Siren Software** was selling *Disc Mate* for the 8256 and 8512, a complete directory editor which allows you to recover erased files and prevent files from being accidentally erased. **Advanced Memory Systems** of Warrington launched no less than five new products to complement the highly successful *AMX Mouse*. They included the *AMX Pagemaker* which allows you to produce your own newspaper or poster. They were also displaying *AMX Digitiser*, *AMX Magazine Maker*, and *AMX 3D Zicon*.

Alligata
SOFTWARE WITH BITE

Northern Computers (Cheshire) launched the *Amstelex System* for networked and standalone Amstrads to use a direct telex line without the need for specialist software. Close by **Arnor** was displaying the first Spelling Checker for the two Joyces. *Prospell* has been developed to work with *Locoscript* and all other Amstrad word processing systems. **Vanguard Leisure** of Preston launched a music generator called *Music Master*. This software is available on cassette or disk and enables the computer keyboard to be used as a music synthesiser. A multi-purpose interface for the CPC micros, called *Multiface Two*, was unveiled by **Romantic Robot** of London. **Evesham Micros** demonstrated *Disc Wizard*, which allows the transfer of all memory-based programs to disk.

That in a nutshell is the lowdown on the fourth Amstrad Show. The next one is again being held at the Novotel in London and will be another three day event, from October 3 to 5 inclusive. It is sure to be another financial success!

COLOSSUS CHESS 4 JOYCED

One of the best home computer chess programs has been converted to run on the PCW 8256 and 8512 word processors. **CDS** claim it has a range of features that make other programs pale in comparison.

In a series of 16 game matches *Colossus 4 Chess* defeated 24 other programs, the results varying from 10-6 to 16-0 in favour of the former. The average number of moves examined per second is 170 with the program working from two to 12 ply ahead. There is 36K of machine code program driving the game with 5K of data and a 'book' of over 3,000 opening moves. It costs £15.95 on disk for the two Joyces.

TIME AND MAGIK ON THE WAY

Level 9 has announced plans to release a mega-mix trilogy of three adventures, *Red Moon*, *The Price of Magik*, and *Lords of Time*, for the Amstrad PCW8256 and 8512 machines. On disk only it will sell for £19.95 and is scheduled for release mid-August.

AMSTRAD SAY NO TO THOR QL

Amstrad have acted quickly to stop CST from producing their Thor version of the QL. It claims the 'intellectual property rights' it bought from Sinclair include those relating to the QL circuit board and it intends to block any attempt to produce a machine based on the QL's hardware.

CST is confident it can acquire circuit boards for the machine from one of Sinclair's suppliers, but an Amstrad spokesman insists 'it has all the intellectual property rights to the QL'. The company is insistent nobody can produce a micro based on the QL hardware.

The Amstrad spokesman added **CST** would have to ask them for permission to use these components and even if they did so the approval would not be given.

CST's intention with Thor is to sell it as a £550 upgrade to the QL incorporating disk drive and interfaces, and then to eventually sell complete machines using QL circuit boards bought by **CST**. A number of these could be produced from early production runs but if the company is to produce the machine in any large numbers they must first persuade a manufacturer to re-start production of the boards.

It's rumoured Korean manufacturer, **Samsung**, are willing to resume production for anyone prepared to make a commitment of taking at least 8,000 circuit boards a month, this is much higher than the 1,000 a month projected by **CST**.

This controversy over ownership of rights to Sinclair products does highlight the confusion which has existed since Alan Sugar bought Sinclair for £5 million. At the time Sugar said he had the rights to produce and sell all Sinclair machines throughout the world with the exception of Portugal, and possibly Mexico, where **Timex** has the rights. **Timex Portugal** has since arranged for 800,000 Sinclair machines to be sold to Poland and would appear to have the rights to sell in all Eastern Bloc countries.

GET FAT FOR AN EXTRA £190

Hot on the heels of our exclusive feature last month revealing how, for a meagre £20, you could upgrade your PCW8256 to Fat Joyce status, albeit without the second disk drive, **Citadel Products Limited**, have come up with a conversion scheme, costing £189.95, which adds a second 3 inch disk drive of 1Mb capacity and triples the RAM disk to 368K.

The one megabyte unformatted second disk drive is identical to the new Amstrad 8512 drive and fits internally. No messy external box and cables of other kits now on the market! The extra memory increases the RAM disk from 112K to 368K and will now allow a full disk of programs from drive one to be simply moved to RAM disk.

The Radec U512 kit comes complete with all the items needed and full instructions how to fit. The only tools needed are screwdrivers and a small hacksaw. **Citadel** claim it can be fitted in under 20 minutes by any person with the knowledge to change a plug fuse! However, if you are not feeling creative a network of computer dealers has been set up to enable purchasers to buy and have the kit fitted by a dealer.

TEST CRICKET FOR AMSTRAD

Just about in time to catch the season, Audiogenic Software Limited has released *Graham Gooch Test Cricket* for the Amstrad CPC machines. Out last year for the 64 and Spectrum, the Amstrad version costs £9.95 for the cassette and £14.95 for the disk, it is claimed to feature lifelike animated graphics, a choice of simulation or arcade playing mode, sound effects, built in England and Australian test squads and full scoreboard display between overs.

SPEEDING UP THE CENTRONICS GLP SERIES

Centronics has recently announced an increase of 100 % in the print speed of its 'Great Little Printer' (GLP). It now produces draft print at 100 characters per second and claims excellent near letter quality results at 25cps.

The GLP 11 is a titchy lightweight dot matrix printer, measuring just 13 inches wide by 7.7 inches deep and weighing in at just under 8lbs. It fits easily into a briefcase making it ideal for use with portable computers, as well as home computers and desktop micros.

In spite of its size, the GLP 11 offers a wide range of features including IBM PC block and pin- ▶

GET TO THE PERSONAL COMPUTER WORLD SHOW

FREE!

COURTESY OF PCW AND AMTIX!

The PERSONAL COMPUTER WORLD SHOW is is one of the world's leading exhibitions for those interested in every aspect of computing from hardware to software, games to business use. We've got 10 tickets to give away in this little comp, and the winners also get a full show guide thrown in for free (worth £1). This year's Computer World Show is, as usual, at Olympia in London and is open to the public between the 5th and 7th of September — the tickets may be used on any of these days. So if you would like to get into the show for free, get weaving! The first 10 correct entries (received before 14th August) drawn will win one ticket and a show guide, PLUS an AMTIX! cap to wear.

Find the following 11 words hidden in the wordsquare and ring them clearly. Don't forget to fill in your name, address and telephone number (if you have one). A photocopy of the square is acceptable if you don't want to cut up the magazine!

PERSONAL
WORLD
AMSTRAD
AMTIX
OLYMPIA
TICKET
GUIDE
LONDON
EXHIBITION
HARDWARE
SOFTWARE

A	M	T	I	L	O	L	Y	M	P	I	R	O
G	U	I	K	N	O	D	N	O	L	W	A	N
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PCW SHOW COMP, AMTIX! PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB

addressable graphics, 12 international character sets and a variety of print modes such as condensed, emphasised and double-strike, as well as subscript, superscript, and underline. It also provides flexibility of paper handling, accepting A4 cut sheets or fanfold paper as standard, whilst a paper roll holder and tractor assembly are available as options.

The new GLP11 is available with both RS 232 Serial and Centronics Parallel Interfaces, and is IBM and FX mode switch selectable, ensuring compatibility with almost every popular PC. It costs £199.

AMSTRAD FAIR IN MADRID

Over 15,000 people attended the first Amstrad Fair when it was held in Madrid where more than 40 exhibitors showed off the latest in software, peripherals and books dedicated solely to Amstrads.

At present it's estimated there are over 200,000 people who own Amstrads in Spain and the number is rising rapidly every week.

The success of the show has prompted **Indescomp**, the official representatives of Amstrad Consumer Electronics in Spain, to hold a similar event in the Autumn.

TIME TO UPGRADE YOUR GAC

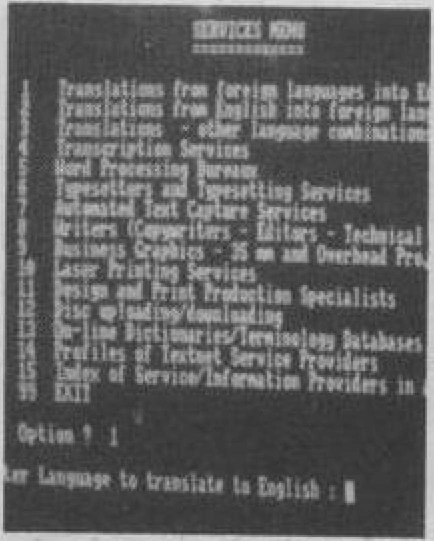
If you are the owner of a copy of **Incentive**s *Graphic Adventure Creator* then you may be delighted to hear that soon it will be possible to upgrade it free of charge simply by returning the original program to the company in Reading.

Graphic Adventure Creator Plus boasts disk access, allowing the creation of massive adventures — 120K plus! The graphics are extended, including a perfect fill routine, several thousand shading patterns, shown on screen; more versatile picture merging, mouse compatibility and text on the graphics screen.

It has a new, easier to use editor, including a disk catalogue option; faster adventures can be created with the new text compression technique, and a split-mode screen, and user defined characters for a better atmosphere, which is also useful for foreign characters. Room descriptions and messages can now be up to 1024 characters long and not just 256.

Graphic Adventure Creator Plus is a must for all professional adventure writers and sells for £49.95 in disk form only. It will be released in September.

TEXTNET DATABASE THROUGH AN AMSTRAD



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er Language to translate to English : █
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A quiet electronic revolution has been taking place in the world of translation. Too many people believe translations are done by academics living in garrets and indeed, such misconceptions die hard. However, the arrival of the Joyce and Fat Joyce has enabled not only the newly trained graduates but also, their well established colleagues, to be able to invest in micros.

The inventor of the **Textnet network of Service Providers**, Robert Rooke, believes his network, coupled with the affordability of the PCW machines, has bred a new generation of translators.

Textnet, *which can be accessed by any of* **Telecom Gold**'s 44,000 mailbox holders, offers companies on-line access to a wide range of text related services, with particular emphasis on translators and the Amstrad's eight language character set and electronic mail capability the translator is no longer time and distance dependent when seeking assignments.

Translators, who can be based virtually anywhere, can register as service providers on **Textnet** at a cost of just £100 per year which includes **Telecom Gold** registration. All they need to get started is an Amstrad, an interface, and a modem. Via their electronic mailbox they receive work for translation and send the translated text back in the same way. This text can then be transmitted via **Telecom Gold** directly to a typesetter, design and print specialist, or a laser printing service without the need to re-key in the text, thus making significant economies.

DOMARK PLAY TRIVIAL PURSUIT

Domark are bringing out the computer version of the game, *Trivial Pursuit*.

The board game has sold almost 70 million copies worldwide and the computer version will feature many of the questions from the Master Genius Edition. In addition, because computers offer the added bonus of sound and graphics, using these facilities, additional questions will be incorporated.

Advance orders for the game, which will be launched at the PCW Show in September, already exceed 40,000 units in the United Kingdom alone.

STRATEGY

ALL OF YOUR VIOLENT DREAMS

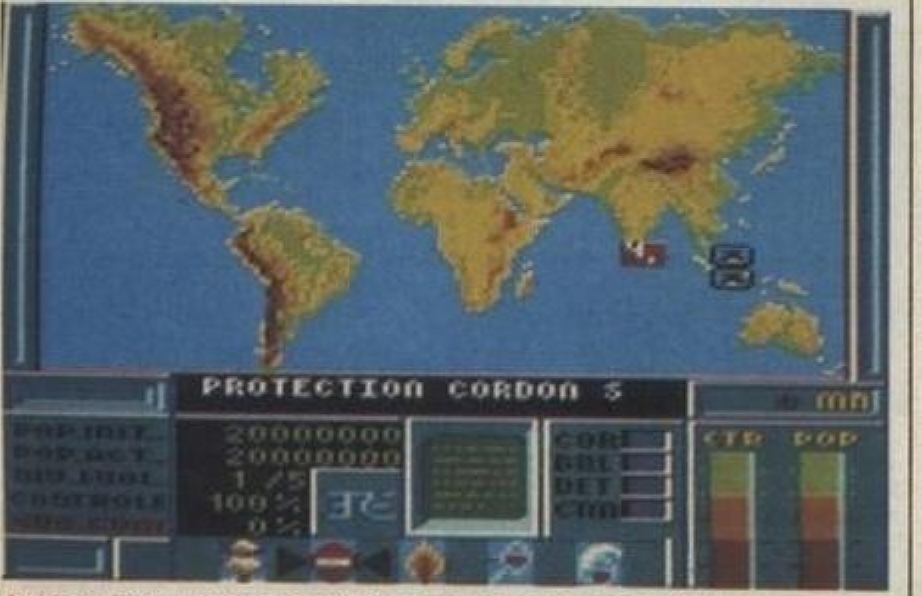
Ever thought for a moment about what it must really be like to die on a modern battlefield? The searing heat of lead sinking in to your flesh is the least of the modern soldier's worries. How about being covered from head to toe in jellied petrol? You would probably suffocate before the heat killed you. Or what about the cluster bomb that can send millions of spinning razors in every direction, passing through flesh and bone as if they weren't there? Nerve gas can cause convulsions and suffocation or perhaps a blister agent to crack the skin and make you bleed with every move.

Shrapnel from explosions fifty yards away can leave you lying in the mud, desperately trying to hold your guts together and praying for a miracle. All around you are hysterical screams for the medics who have just had their heads blown off. There would be a lot of that — modern soldiers are often trained to shoot to wound. It presents more of a logistical and morale problem to a rapidly advancing enemy.

The life expectancy of a British Paratrooper in action in West Germany is measured in minutes. Hopefully, in the short time they have, they can slow or cripple part of the enemy's plans. The Somme, Verdun, Galipoli, Stalingrad . . . none would ever compare with a modern pitched battle in Europe. And we're talking about conventional weaponry. The all encompassing fireball of a tactical nuke would be almost merciful by comparison. Let's hope the games we play remain just that.

TIME TO DIE? PREVIEW

Can you imagine a world which has been struck down by a series of unknown viruses? That is the scenario for the latest release from PSS/Ere, *CONTAMINATION*



At this early stage in the game, the epidemic hasn't had much time to spread. Still, there's that beautiful map to ogle over.

The latest offering from PSS is *Contamination*, another licensed game from the French company, Ere. Though not yet finished, the only thing that remains to be altered is the actual text of the game into English. The game, whilst to many people apparently original, most likely owes its existence to an old SSI title called *Epidemic*. Only the outline of the plot really makes this any different from the SSI game.

And what of the plot. Well, the game is a strategical simulation of what happens when a series of unknown viruses create worldwide epidemics that threaten the very existence of mankind itself. Just how they do this is obvious from the main screen where the player is presented with a high-res four colour map of the world. Markers appear on this map whenever signs of an epidemic breaking out appear. The player can then take one of a series of possible actions to prevent the outbreak from spreading. But it's a race against time.

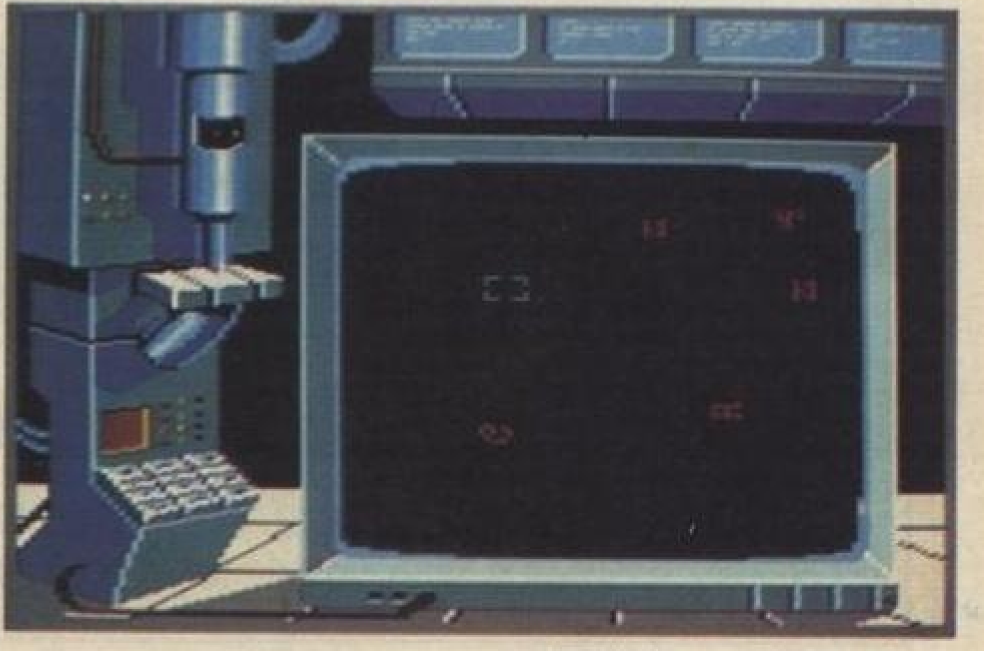
Probably the best course of action in the first instance would be to throw a cordon around the affected area. This should never be seen as anything other than the most temporary of measures however, as the viruses seem to be able to use all kinds of uncheckable carriers. However, by sealing an area in this way, time is bought to take other preventative action. The surrounding areas may be evacuated and then burned until only the barest of barren landscapes remain, making the carrying of the disease even more difficult for the invisible terrors. More important, the player can investigate the virus in the hope of an antidote being found.

When this course of action is chosen, the player is transferred from the main screen to a laboratory. Here it is possible to put an ID tag on the disease and examine the component parts of the virus in an attempt to build the antidote. Once this has been achieved, the antidote may be tried out on the affected area. If it works, notice will be given in an information window. Notes are important as it is quite possible that the same serum will work in more than one case, though you can never be absolutely certain.

If populations are falling fast and hope of stalling the epidemic seems slight then there is another, less savory option open to the player. Use of strategic nuclear weapons may halt the outbreak. This is only a last ditch attempt however. Use these weapons too soon and you will be lynched by what's left of the desperate population. Over use will bring about all the devastating effects of a nuclear winter. But then this game is all about the end of the world.

As the game mechanics are complete I can say that it's very good indeed. High playability and tense atmosphere are coupled with a terrifying, but compulsive and logical, plot with the result of an excellent game. I look forward to the final, fully packaged version with eager anticipation.

Inside the laboratory, the player-turned-mad-scientist gets to grips with a desperate attempt to create an anti-virus.



FORMULATING FIREPOWER

The dilemma facing any designer of strategy games is how much authenticity should be forsaken for the game to be made playable. It has to be realised that the line must be drawn somewhere. So how is the decision made on what details go into the game and which are left out?

The best way to analyse this problem is to take the case of the development of a historical simulation in which all the factors that brought about the outcome of the battle are known and then define a hierarchical set of conditions with the most influential factors at the top of the list and less important ones lower down.

Deciding which factors are important and which are not is a process which is likely to produce different results in different subjects, though there will be some similarities. The number of fighting operatives (whether they be counted in infantry, ships, tanks or aircraft) on each side is arguably the most important single factor in a conflict. If the probability of which of the two sides is most likely to win (given equal parameters for both antagonists) is calculated, all the other conditions can become stages in a bigger probability sum.

The most boring wargames are those that pit two entirely equal sides against each other without any special circumstances. This just results in a battle of wits with the opponent. Such things can be fun but, as I hope to show, there can be much more to wargaming than this. If the two sides are not evenly matched in terms of the number of units available, then a new way to achieve balance must be found. For instance, most schools of thought suggest that if A has twice as many jet fighters as B, B's fighters each need to be four times as *good* as A's and so on.

This allows us to examine a new factor, the quality of the equipment used to fight the battle. Also importantly, bracketed within the equation used to determine the relative strengths of forces based on their equipment, there should be a tempering factor to quantify the efficiency of the pilots, gunners, riflemen or whatever. After all, there's little advantage in having the most advanced multi-role combat aircraft in the world if your best pilots fly them like bricks.

When you consider the various advantages and disadvantages given to each player, the best principle to use is that of the two-edged sword. Give a player something that he has to figure out how to use. Give him plenty of good tanks, say, crewed by efficient men. But make sure he only has a trickle of fuel to last him the first half of the game. And then give his opponent something to heighten this contrast but still be difficult to use. For instance, the opponent could have an easier victory condition such as 'Take hill number 1'. Of course he might have to do this in the first half of the game if he wants to avoid being massacred once the enemy is fully fuelled.

So player A has to manage his resources carefully in the first half of the battle to secure a victory in the second half but can plan his tactics over a period of time twice that available to his enemy. Player B can afford to throw everything he has into one objective and gain the advantage over an initially weak opponent but he is in a race against time.

The example above has taken two more factors into account. Logistics and victory conditions can be different for each player. That way, one player mastering his forces doesn't make the challenge lessened by an observant opponent. Each has his own problems to overcome and the players cannot just learn from each other — they must learn for themselves.

Next month, I will be taking a look at the effects of morale, terrain and fatigue and will try to formulate each of them to discover exactly where the balance should lie. Then all we have to do is see if what we have left can fit into an average Amstrad. See you then.

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FOR A FULL LIST OF ALL PSS PRODUCTS SEND S.A.E. TO
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AND THERE'S 25 COPIES OF *DOOMDARK'S REVENGE* AS WELL!

HELP CRUMBLY GET HIS REVENGE!

Sick of the jokes about bath chairs and ear trumpets, our ageing Editor — or Old Crumbly as he is affectionately known around AMTIX! Towers — has decided to wreak his revenge on the AMTIX! trainee comps YOP — El Retardo. (Start at the bottom and work your way up — that's Malcy's philosophy.) El Retardo has been responsible for running a spate of 'Get Crumbly' competitions over the last few issues, and The Crumbly One is getting a bit fed up. Our apprentice YOP likes nothing more than a bit of Malcolm-Bating you see. Well, enough is enough as they say, and now Old Crumbly has commanded that a competition should be written to even the score a bit.

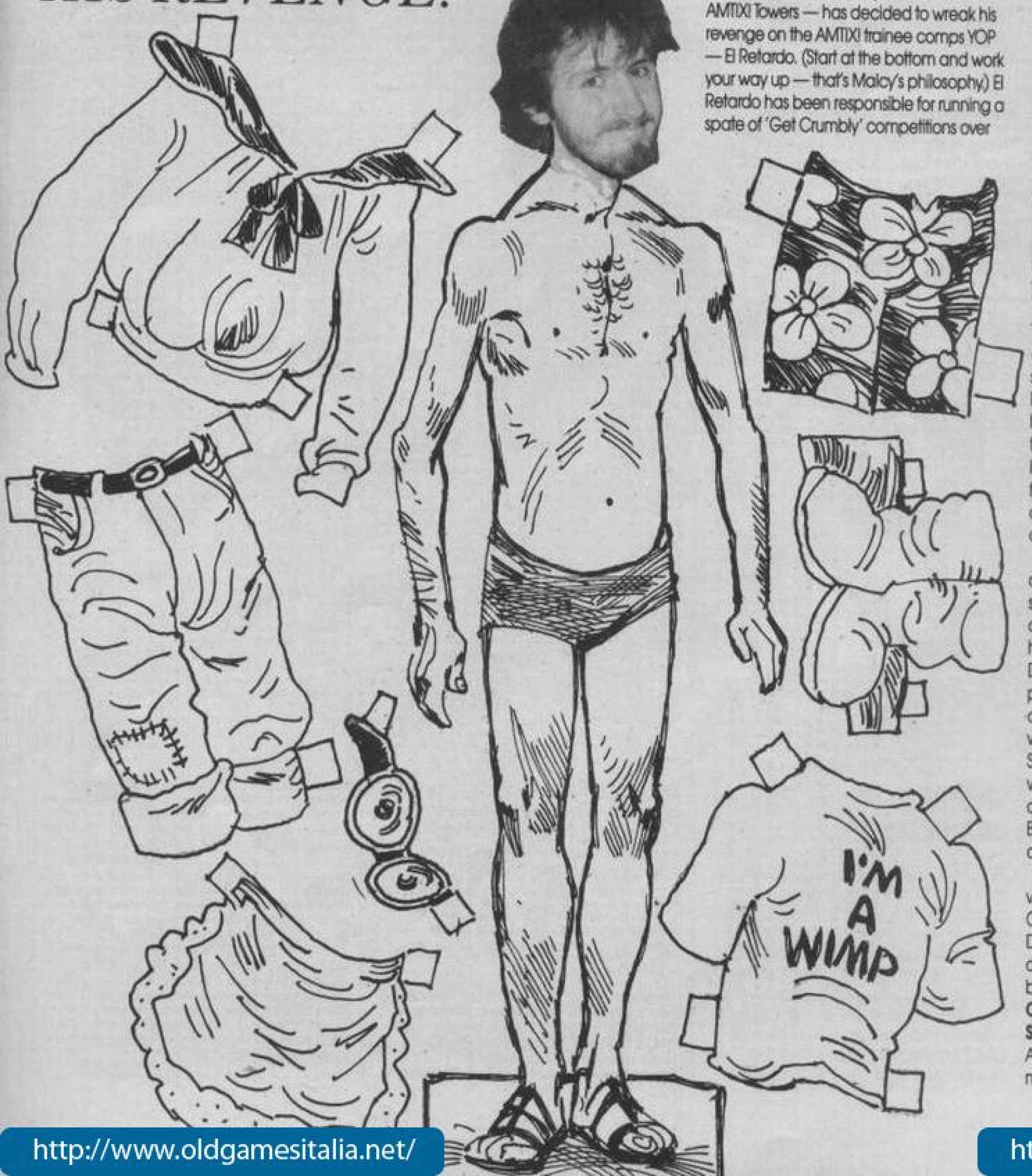
Seeing himself increasingly in the role of Dark And Evil One, Beyond's great strategy/adventure, *DOOMDARK'S REVENGE*, has given him the chance he's been waiting for. This sequel to *LORDS OF MIDNIGHT*, is all about how the downtrodden aged get their own back on the carefree young, like El Retardo.

During the last few weeks El Retardo (who shall remain nameless) has astounded the Editorial floor with his total lack of dress sense. He has taken to turning up for work looking like a cross between an Italian wine waiter and one of the Bee Gees! This might have something to do with being dropped on his head as a baby, but the Crumbly One reckons Superstar Status has more to do with this strange behaviour.

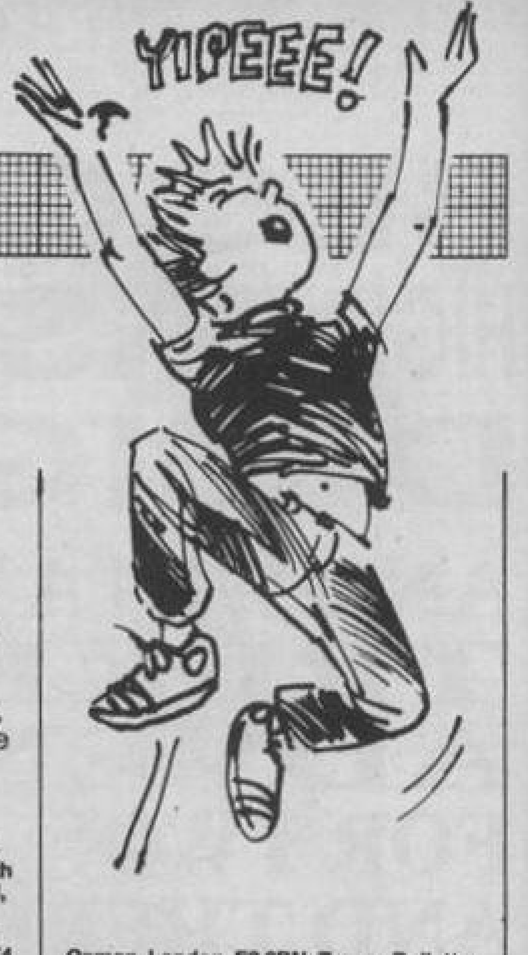
Yes, incredible though it seems, El Retardo, Trainee Competition Minion and teaspoon washer, has been offered a bit part in a salad cream TV commercial as a Young Noble. (Well, so he'd like to believe, in fact he's been cast as a pig farmer but we don't tell him that). Honestly, he's been behaving like a right budgie lately. Standing in front of full length mirrors, preening his beard and quoting passages from Shakespeare, it quite turns the stomach.

Anyway, here's a chance for you to decide how the lowest of the AMTIX! low should dress himself. Here's a selection of outfits in which you can dress him. Yes, you have your very own cut-out-and-dress-up Dimbo Doll. Cut carefully around the outline, paste El Retardo onto a piece of cardboard and practice dressing him up. How exciting! we hear you cry. But there's more — the best Sumpter Dresser, oops, El Retardo Dresser will win a week's Pony Trekking Adventure Holiday for two courtesy of those nice people at Beyond. And for the 25 runners-up, there's a copy of *DOOMDARK'S REVENGE*.

Get in a bit of practice with the outfits provided here and then design your very own Clot Couture or Silly Suit to adorn your Dimbo Doll. Create your masterpiece of clothing design, affix it firmly to the little carboard-backed figurine and whizz it off to **REVENGE COMP, AMTIX! PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB** making sure it arrives by 21st August. Prizes will be awarded in order of merit . . .



WINNERS WINNERS WINNERS WINNERS



Uncle Malcolm often forgets competition minions are only human, occasionally he even argues with people that I can't undertake certain jobs because I'm not compos mentis! Even with all the modesty in the world I can't help but feel a little sick this month with all the super prizes that will be going out to you lucky lot that managed to have your names drawn out from the mountain range that is known as the competition mail from issue seven. Now that this mountain has been cleared it's time for me to don helmet and climbing boots as I begin the thankless task of conquering the next pile of competition entries.

I may be persistent in my task, but I know, dear readers, that many of you share the same superhuman traits as I, with many names now sticking in my mind as people who enter every competition and have their labour rewarded with the occasional goodie. There are lots of goodies in this issue that will be reward to many who spent a little time and parted with a meagre seventeen pee in pursuit of their goal. Such diligence and persistence does pay off, so if you are one of the unfortunates whose investments didn't pay off this time, don't give up. Just make sure you enter the competitions in this issue and keep your fingers crossed. Having your name put in the results section is any amster's true reward but there's always something to go with it to make it a truly lasting experience and with this in mind we move onto this month's lucky list of winners. Their prizes will appear in due course . . .

DR WHO COMPETITION

The Doctor Who TV series has been a firm favourite with all of us at AMTIX! towers for a long time. Uncle Malcolm even remembers the Doctor before he had his first regeneration, which must have been over twenty years ago. We all think Malcolm could learn a few things from the Doctor. The people at **Micro Power** did and they decided to offer a free day out to meet the Doctor in his rehearsal studio to the lucky winner who is Steve Mitchell of Lincoln LN5 8SP. Copies of the game *Doctor Who and the Mines of Terror* will be going out to console the twenty runners up.

Steve Mitchell, Lincoln LN5 8SP; Master Moray Laing, Berwickshire TD2 6PY; Semin Malde, Surrey GU4 7JB; Gordon Hay, Glasgow GO1 2QB; Ray Girvan, Birmingham B16 ORP; S Dixon, Co Durham DL3 OLH; Michael Hateley, Fife KY1 5DR; Mr R F Keeley, Oxford OX8 3LX; Charlie Taylor, Kent CT14 7AL; Michael Aldridge, Wolverhampton WV10 9DF; R G Messenger, Perth PH2 9NE; Tony Elsden, London N18 2HA; Mr A N Wallen, Devon PL6 6TE; Rajbinder Sahota, Derby DE3 8JH; Jonathan Williams, Surrey SM1 4JH; Craig Thompson, Berwickshire TD14 5SJ; Daniel Ruck, Sheffield S7 1NB; Peter J Bowen, Swindon SN3 2RQ; Andrew Webster, Notts NG12 5EG; M Morrall, Barnsley S72 8RS.

THE COLOSSUS 4 COMPETITION

This was an easy competition, providing you had the knowledge to write a program for your Arnold. If you did not do that it was VERY hard. You had to work out how many grains of wheat there would be on a chess board if you started with one on one square and then kept doubling the number on each of the other 63. Tricky huh. The answer was so huge I am not going to attempt to type it out because I am sure to make an error. The winner of the superb Lewis Chess Set is Ernest Nelson of 15 Jocelyn Gardens, Woodstock Road, Belfast BT6 9BA. The set will be on its way in due course. The following each receive a copy of the chess game.

P D King, Southampton SO1 2BP; John Birdsey, Rochester, Kent ME3 9LE; C Collins, Worcs WR9 1DH; J Jagger Taunton, TA1 4JE; Martin O'Brien, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 2PQ; R A Mathie, Dunstable, Beds, LU5 5HQ; J Smith, Southampton, SO2 3BW; L Garrard, Lincoln, LN4 4LO; Mr G Man, Fareham, Hants, PO14 4PY; Matthew Todd, Hale, Nr Altrincham, Cheshire, WA15 9DZ.

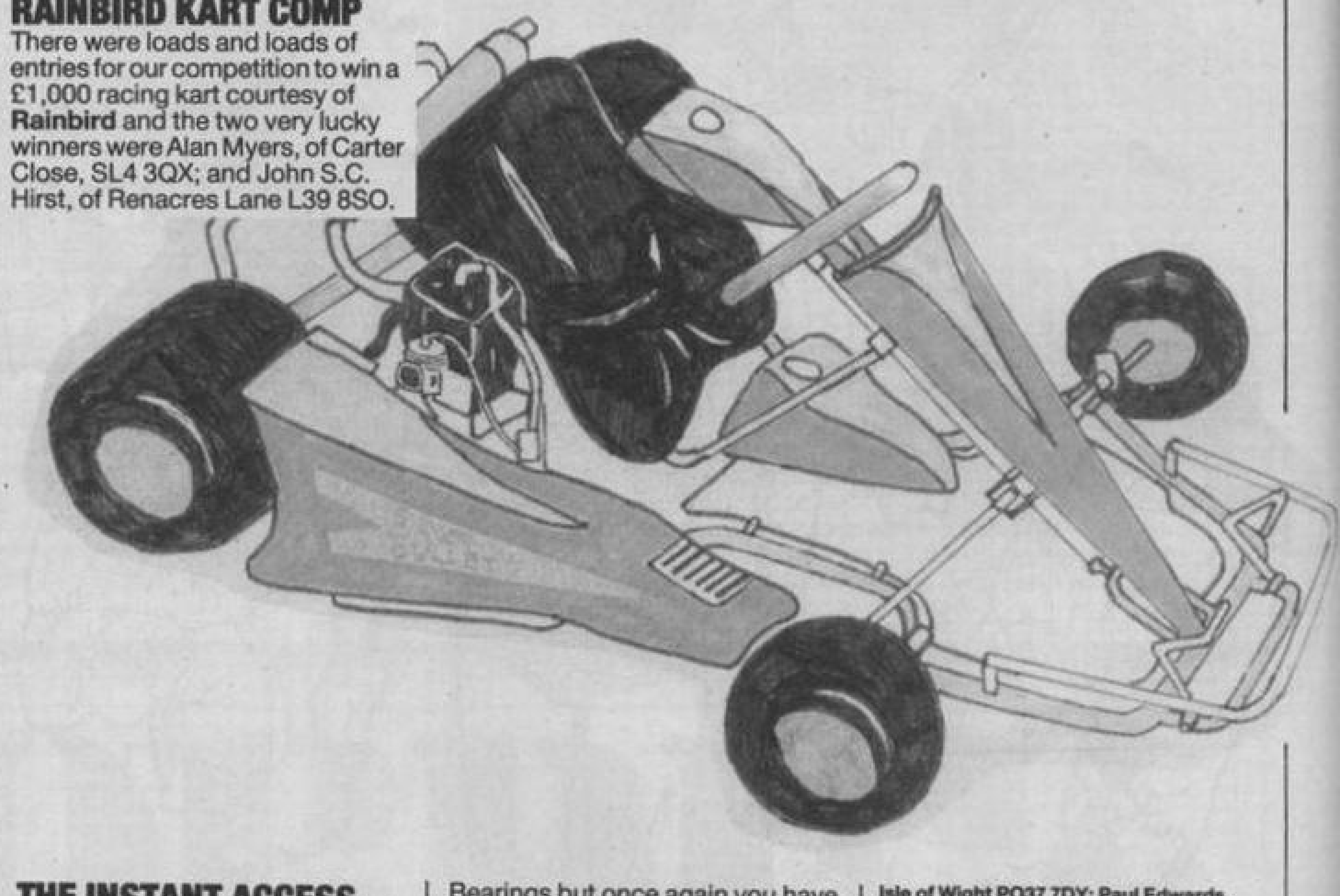
RAINBIRD KART COMP

There were loads and loads of entries for our competition to win a £1,000 racing kart courtesy of **Rainbird** and the two very lucky winners were Alan Myers, of Carter Close, SL4 3QX; and John S.C. Hirst, of Renacres Lane L39 8SO.

INCENTIVE'S NAME A GAME COMPETITION

Bit of a tricky competition this if you were not an arcade freak for, of course, you have to correctly identify 10 of these fun games from some vague clues. Anyway, you surpassed yourselves and the 50 winners, each of whom will receive a bumper bag of *Moon Cresta* goodies are:

Nicholas Leigh, Staffs ST5 4HZ; Mr P Jolleys, Lancs WN2 4HD; Lee Robinson, South Humberside DN35 OHT; Stuart Mansfield, Berks SL4 5ST; Lee Russell, London E7 OLF; John Ward, Wigston, Leics LE8 2JJ; Richard Harrison, Whitchurch, Cardiff CF4 1BE; D Rogers, Shropshire SY11 1AQ; Richard Ormson, Bury BL8 2HW; N Taylor, Ormskirk L39 2DZ; Andrew Green, Berkshire RJ7 6JB; D A Bullock, Luton LU4 0BU; Stuart McCartney, Walsall WS1 3LJ; Ian Whitehead, London SE7 1AJ; Marc Bichener, Bedford MK41 8HS; Matthew Burton, West Midlands B72 1DW; Chris Beltrami, Brockley, London 1HL; Mark Long, Essex CM8 1ER; Andrew Webster, Notts NG12 5EG; G J Thurtle, Sheffield S30 4QJ; H Breach, Hants SO23 9QR; Daniel Singerman, Southampton, SO2 1SF; Heath Steward, Worcs B61 9HN; Daryl Ward, Wigston LE8 5DD; Richard Budd, Hampshire, GU34 1QT; Haran Silva, Franks Ave, Surrey, KT3 5DD; D Dewey, Cedar Close, Herts, WD6 2ED; Christian Watts, Tyne and Wear, NE39 1EQ; Chris Clark, Clifton Rd, Wales; Ayan Osman, London, E2 6BN; Tracey Dallatty, Kinsward House, London; Nicholas Palmer, Berks, RG13 1TA; John Sholicar, Glos, GL52 3DA; Eric Wilson, Cambridgeshire, CB6 2TG; Michael Godfrey, Middlesex, TW1 4RJ; Steven Barnes, Windermere Rd, BT38 7JR; Chris Secker, Nunthorpe TS7 0NX; Matthew Huntingdon, Cumbria LA23 2HF; Ben Fletcher, Middlesex TW11 9LY; Christian Kavanagh, Farnborough GU14 6LB; Scott Logan, Lanark ML11 9RA; Richard Harrison, Forest Hill, London SE23 2TJ; Ian Whitehead, London SE7 8AJ; Colin Broad, Manchester OL1 2NY; Trunkie Harman, Tunbridge Wells TN1 2LE; Sandra Shevill, Surrey CR3 2ST; Heath Steward, Bromsgrove, Worcs B61 9HN; Haran Siva, New Malden KT3 5DD; Chris Secker, Nunthorpe, TS7 0NX; David Hall, Manchester M32 9HA.



THE INSTANT ACCESS COMPETITION

The May issue of AMTIX! saw you trying to find a present for a crotchety old dragon that stands guard between the differing levels in **Activision**'s *Eidolon*. The dragons seemed to show more than a passing resemblance to our very own Malcolm and I would have offered the dragon a free pint of Old Flatulence Bitter from the dusty cellars of the Pig and Ball Bearings but once again you have proved your superiority over the tired imagination of the humble comps minion with the first prize of a super disk drive going to Phil Irish of Shrewsbury SY2 5RB. Not wanting, but waiting, will be the thirty runners up who will be receiving a copy of the game *Eidolon*

Gary Sutherland, York YO1 4JZ; Andrew Oxley, Billingham Cleveland; Nick Card, Hants GU14 ODX; D Ramdenee, Essex RM18 8TD; Mr D Parkins, Cumbria CA2 7JY; Mark Warriner, North Yorkshire YO18 7HY; Simon Raffs, Perth PH2 9ET; Justin Mason, Isle of Wight PO37 7DY; Paul Edwards, Herts SG1 5TW; C P Snaazell, Perthshire FK15 9RG; John Burd, Telford TF7 4AD; Martyn Robinson, Lancs BB9 SBG; Mike Wong, Cheshire M33 3QP; Mark Putterill, South Yorkshire S75 6EF; Stephen Swain, Birmingham B47 5HL; Gary Sutherland, York YO1 4JZ; Adrian Dalton, Northampton NN11 4QL; Quincy Grant, Plaistow E13 9PW; Matthew Blakesley-Spicer, South Yorkshire S64 OAX; Jan Szafranski, Croydon CRO 4LR; Anthony Logan, Belfast BT12 7PA; Tim Katz, London NW3 2RU; Paul Mansbridge, Brighton BN1 5GN; Nigel Jackson, Notts DN22 6QU; John Scholicar, Glos GL52 3DA; Stephen Humphreys, Liverpool L28 4EW; R G Messenger, Perth PH2 9NE; Mark R Long, Essex CM8 1ER; Mr Roy Lewis, Lancs PR4 1XN.

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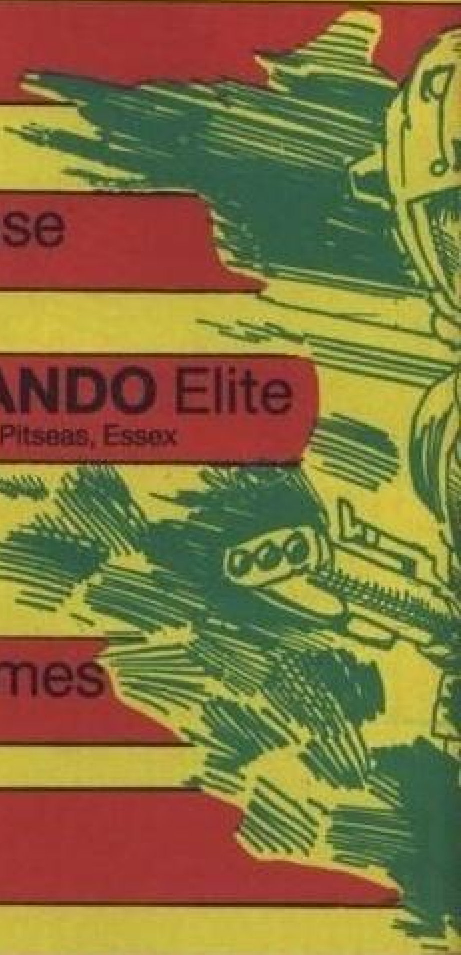
AMTIX! TOP TWENTY FOR AUGUST

Here it is. The latest Top 20 Chart as voted by AMTIX! readers. The figures in parenthesis are last month's position.



1 *(1)* YIE AR KUNG FU Imagine
29,560,080 Michael Salanson, Hove, East Sussex

2 *(-)* ELITE Firebird
365,906 79 credits Alan Miller, Gosport, Hants

3 *(4)* WAY OF THE EXPLODING FIST Melbourne House
1,986,000 Nicholas Johnson, Oxton, Birkenhead

4 *(3)* WHO DARES WINS 11 Alligata
878,760 Roddy Campbell, Claverhouse Drive, Edinburgh

5 *(-)* COMMANDO Elite
159,850 Daniel Vaux-Nobes, Pitseas, Essex

6 *(4)* SORCERY PLUS Virgin Games
218,108 James Phillips, Aldridge, Walsall

7 *(7)* BRUCE LEE US Gold
879,730 Michael Nicholson, Peterlee, County Durham

8 *(-)* SORCERY Virgin Games
99,991 Austin Williams, Tooting, London

9 *(-)* SPINDIZZY Activision
100% of game, 220 jewels, J Henderson, Brixham, Devon

10 *(-)* BATMAN Ocean
8,920 Stephen Barnes, Churchdown, Gloucestershire

11 *(-)* SPELLBOUND Ma
completed Colin J Ward, New Milton, Hants

12 *(8)* GET DEXTER PSS/ERE
87,650 Jimmy O'Moore, Stanmore, Middlesex

13 *(-)* WAY OF T
completed Andrew Sawers, Blairgow

14 *(9)* HIGHWAY ENCOUNTER Vortex

15 *(-)* BARRY MCGUIGAN'S BOXING Activisi

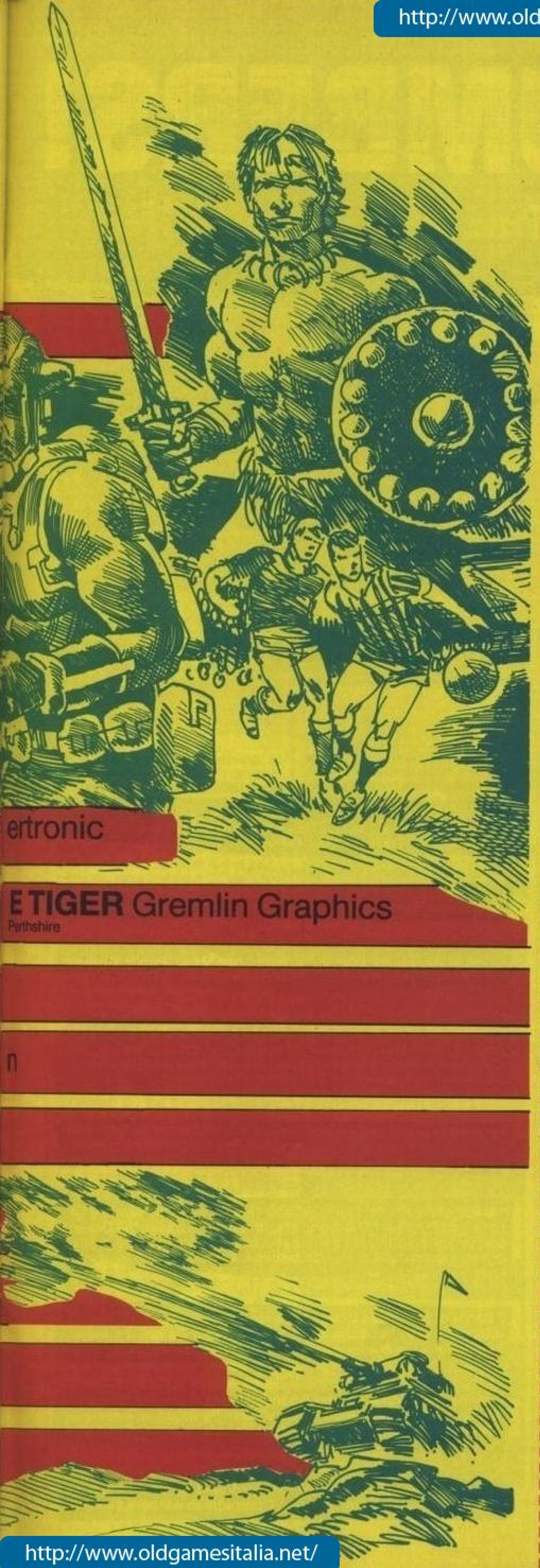
16 *(-)* WINTER GAMES US Gold/Epyx

17 *(14)* KNIGHTLORE Ultimate

18 *(-)* ZOIDS Martech
completed 42,000 killed, Qasir Fiaz, Burnley, Lancashire

19 *(-)* TAU CETI CRL
24,350 816 robots shot, Allan Price, Bramley, Leeds

20 *(14)* SPY VS SPY Beyond



ertronic

E TIGER Gremlin Graphics
Perthshire

n

MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

Thanks to everyone who voted for this AMTIX! Readers' Chart — we don't mind that some of you continue to disagree with our reviewers' views! That's what democracy is all about — disagreeing all the time! In order for the chart to be as representative as possible it's important that as many of you as possible vote each month, so keep those forms coming in!

Congratulations go to **Elite** who have a new entry at number five and to **Imagine** whose game, *Yie Ar Kung Fu*, is still top of the charts.

The high scores continue to be entered but some people are still forgetting to fill in that part of the form. Come on folks, play the game, and complete all relevant parts of the form please!! Anyway congratulations to all those who have their names published in this issue of AMTIX!

VOTE AND WIN £40 OF SOFTWARE

Starting this issue one lucky AMTIX! reader will win no less then £40 of software for voting in our Top 20 feature. In addition a further four ever so trendy readers will be receiving sparkly new AMTIX! hats and T Shirts. After much delving into an AMTIX! hat the lucky £40 winner is **Qasir Fiaz** of Burnley. Those who will receive hats and T shirts are:**Stephen Barns** of Churchdown, Gloucestershire; **Michael Salanson** of Hove;**Austin Williams** of Tooting; and **Daniel Vaux-Nobes** of Pitsea. Perhaps the four would like to write in with their chest size to Aunty Aggie.

Remember, voting is simplicity itself and the only cost to you is a couple of minutes' time and a 17p stamp. Just fill in the form (ALL OF IT PLEASE) and list your five favourite games in descending order with the best one at number one. If you do not want to cut up the magazine you can copy the form on a postcard or the back of a sealed envelope or photo copy the form. Whatever you do don't forget to write in all the details needed!

AMTIX! READERS TOP TWENTY CHART VOTING FORM

Please write in CAPS in an eyestrain free manner.

Name ....

Address ....

....

....

Postcode ....

The World's five hippest games in order of preference are:
TITLE
1 ....
2 ....
3 ....
4 ....
5 ....

From one of the five games above select one and give us your high score:

TITLE ....

ACHIEVEMENT ....

My machine is a 464/664/6128/8256 (delete as applicable).If I am a winner the game I would like is:
....

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No 1 November 1985

*** Complete Guide to games ! * Lightpens * Dun Darach Map * Pyjamarama Map * Everyone's a Wally Map * Lords of Midnight Map * CP/M * Tape to Disk Utilities**

No 2 December 1985

*** Complete Guide II * Fighting Fantasy * Alien 8 Map * Word Processing with Tasman * FORTH on the Amstrad**

No 3 January 1986

*** Gargoyle Games Profile * Knight Lore Map * Public Domain CP/M * Computer Art * Extension ROMs * RS232**

No 4 February 1986

*** Dynamite Dan map * The world of Infocom adventures * Amsoft visit * The first batch of results * Gremlin graphics, the journey, the people and the story * Introduction to seducational software * Preview of the The Music Processor.**

No 5 March 1986

*** Cauldron map * More competition winners * More educational software * the improved AMX Mouse * the Vortex expansion board.**

No 6 April 1986

*** Maps of Gunfright, Marsport and Three Weeks in Paradise * A review of Pyradev * The world of Lothlorien * A visit to the Ocean and Imagine software company * Readers awards * The Amtix! questionnaire * yet more competition winners.**

No 7 May 1986

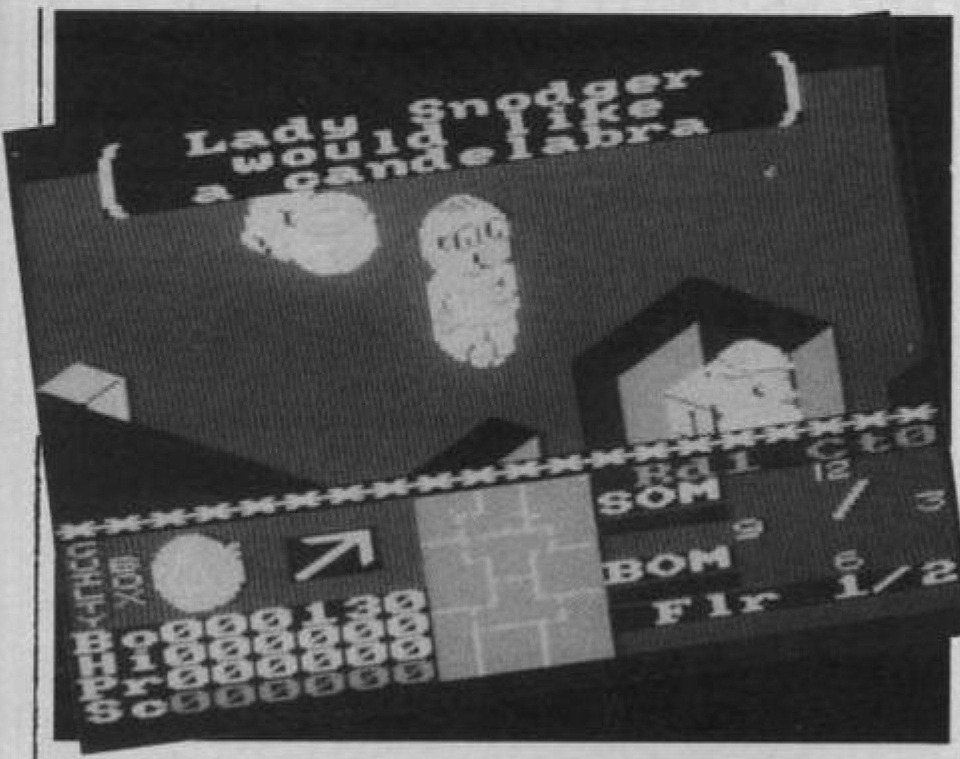
*** Battle of the Chess Giants * The world of PSS * A transatlantic interview with Infocom (pt 1) * Reviews of Rainbird's Music System and the Melbourne Draw * Competition winners.**

No 8 June 1986

*** Maps of Shadowfire and Bounder (parts 1 and 2) * The concluding part of the Infocom interviews * Spotlight on Activision * A dissection of Artificial Intelligence * More competition winners.**

No 9 July 1986

*** Maps of Movie and Nomad * How to beef up your Joyce for £20! * A review of Laser Genius * Competition winners galore.**



SNODGITS

Sparklers, £2.99 cass

Objects are disappearing in Mystery Mansion, not particularly valuble objects but the whole business is upsetting Benson the Butler. What is he to do when Lord Snodger asks for his slippers and they've vanished? Life would be simpler if the happenings were the fault of the mischievous Snodgit pets, but Benson is doubtful they are to blame. So, an impressive array of Detectives has been summoned to discover who the culprit is, but they too fail, so Benson plods on in his own inimmitable fashion trying to clear his name as much as anything else.

You play Benson, with the unenviable task of solving the mystery. Mystery Mansions is not small with over 200 rooms, but to help Benson a map of the place can be accessed during the game. When he has found the mislaid objects and has given them to their correct owners Benson gains access to a Clue Table, two blocks of rows and columns showing a list of objects and suspects. Each row of suspects relates directly to the objects shown. A question is asked and Benson must decide who the guilty party might be. If he makes a wrong guess then he must deliver another object but a correct link between object and suspect puts the felon into the guilty box at the bottom of the screen and Benson can scurry off to find a detective. Three people in the game are guilty and they must all be identified before you can move on to a higher level.

A life is lost every time Benson bumps into a Snodgit also loses a life every time Benson is clumsy and bumps into bits of furniture or walls.

CRITICISM

1 **Although *Snodgits* is original this doesn't mean the game is great. The slow reacting controls are difficult to master but the the 3D perspective is fine. Colour is well used but the characters tend to go very blocky when in the close proximity to each other. A good try by Sparklers but they seeme to have failed to capture my imagination.**

2 From the loading screen onwards it becomes apparent that this is an average game. The graphics are very basic, and although large, are undetailed and wobble about aimlessly. The sound is really sub-standard and mainly consists of a load of forelorn whistles and poops. The game itself is average too and even with its low price tag can't be heartily recommended.

Presentation 54%
Pretty average, with an average title screen.

Graphics 40%
Fat and porky characters and an undetailed playing area.

Sound 21%
On the whole, naff.

Playability 53%
Initially interesting. . . .

Addictive qualities 62%
. . . but eventually laborious and unexciting

Value for money 67%
You get what you pay for.

Overall 60%
A very average game.

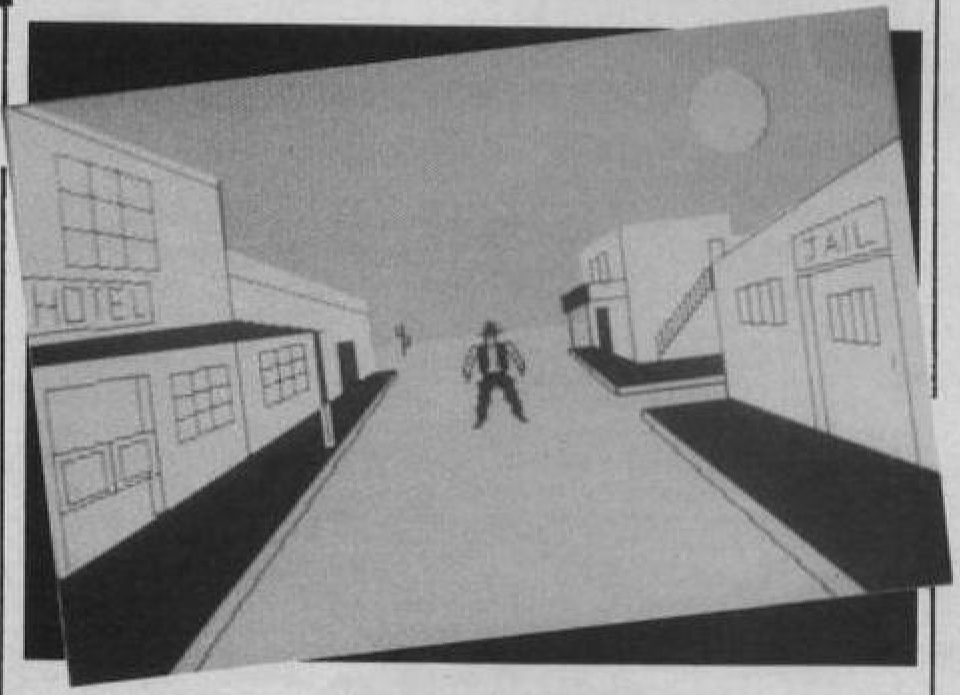
THE WILD BUNCH

Firebird, £1.99 cassette

In the mean old West the pace of life was slow but this couldn't be said for justice and if someone was found at the scene of a murder with a smoking Colt 45 in their hand they didn't hang around unless they wanted a real suspended sentence! Not particularly pleasant especially if the person was innocent and in *The Wild Bunch* you are. The dying man gives you a croaking description of his murderer before he goes to join his ancestors in that great range in the sky. The only way to prove innocence in this matter would seem to be to track down the particular member of *The Wild Bunch* that perpetrated this cold killing, so, armed only with the smoking murder weapon you try to hunt down the killer from his description.

Choosing from three levels of difficulty nothing is easy with the Sheriff having sent a Pinkerton agent to get you. If you arrive at one of the five towns and he's already there he arrests you. The telegraph office provides news concerning the whereabouts of the gang or the agent for a price, but this can be expensive. Starting out with only fifty dollars, the gun and five bullets, more items can be bought from the store in each town.

Upon entering each town the combat strength goes up and money can be made by playing poker in the saloon. Also a stiff drink increases a tired fugitive's strength. Looking around the saloon may uncover some unsavoury looking critters but if you challenge them you must be certain they are a member of the *Wild Bunch*. Then it's a choice between a fight to the death or taking them to the Sheriff. If they are not a member of the gang then it means a fine for wasting the Sheriff's time, or you are arrested for murdering an innocent party, but this time it's for real with instant justice prevailing.



CRITICISM

1 ***The Wild Bunch* is really a text adventure with a few trimmings thrown in. The poker part of the adventure is quite reasonable and very important for making money for a horse, saddle, and other items that are useful when travelling from town to town. The graphics for the showdown are poor but don't detract from what is, after all, a reasonably priced adventure.**

2 I'm afraid this game did not appeal to me at all. It lacks proper graphics although if you are a strategy or adventure fan it may be good practice for you. There's nothing special to *The Wild Bunch* but it's alright for a bit of light entertainment.

Presentation 35%
Simple, no frills and straightforward.

Graphics 32%
No flashing lights in this adventure.

Sound 51%
A little tune during the showdown and spot FX.

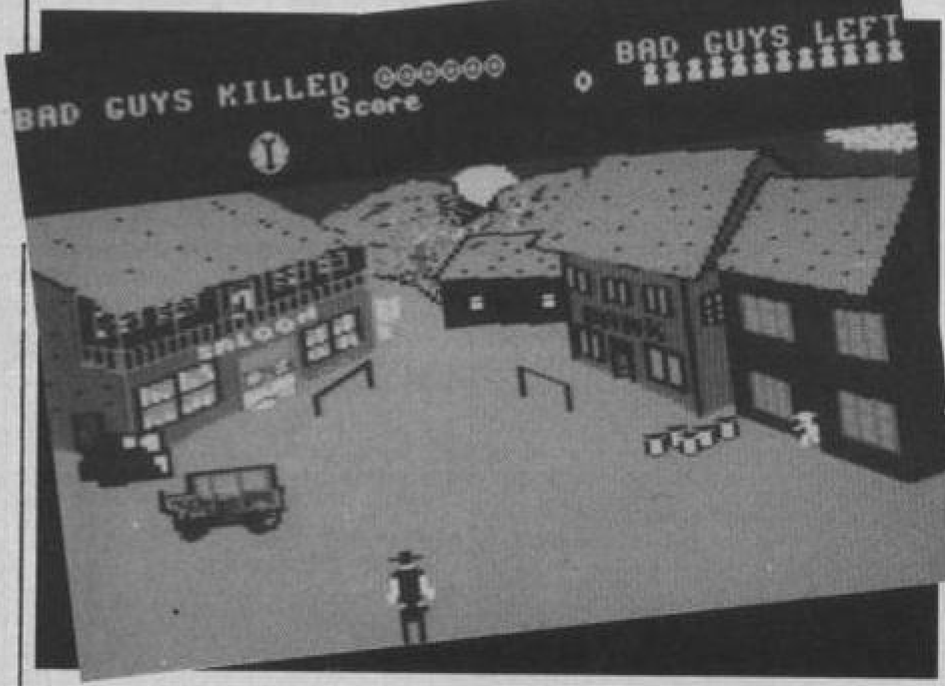
Playability 60%
Very simple to get into.

Addictive qualities 70%
Mixed opinions but strangely compelling.

Value for money 68%
You won't have to rob a bank to buy this!

Overall 65%
Not a lot to pay for a nice, light adventure.

KANE



K*ane* is set during the Wild West period with the Palefaces and the Redskins constantly fighting one other. One chappie, Marshall McGraw, is getting rather cheesed off with this constant fraccas and he's trying to make peace with the redskins, but to earn their trust McGraw must demonstrate his skill in a duck shooting competition. If does well then the Indians may award him some peace tokens which he can use to get a peace treaty drawn up.

Problem: the N.A.S.T. Railway company intends to run a track straight through the Indians' burial grounds, but if the treaty is drawn up they won't be allowed to. So, N.A.S.T decides to stop McGraw from getting the peace tokens to Washington where the treaty is to be drawn up. In the town of Kane, they place several men to ambush him on his way to the train, forcing him into a shoot out situation. If Mac manages to shoot all the baddies he can catch the Washington train, although he'll have to ride after it because it's already left.

The game is split into four sections, duck shoot, ride to Kane, shoot out and catching the train. The first sheet is a sort of *Missile Command* where you use a cursor to aim your bow and arrows. Pass it and the peace tokens are awarded.

The next screen depicts McGraw's heroic dash to Kane on his horse. You're given control over his horse and must race him to the town, jumping over the various obstacles. Fail to clear an obstacle and Mac is thrown.

Once Kane is reached the shoot-out takes place. MacGraw stands on the street and the nasties pop their heads out from behind buildings and take pot shots at the hero. Using an aiming cursor like the one on the Duck shoot screen you have to dispose of all the men before he can dash after the Washington bound train.

There is a practice mode which lets you attempt the various stages singly, but you can't finish the game in this mode

Mastertronic, £1.99 cass

CRITICISM

1 **This is a very playable game which offers a fair bit of variety. The graphics change from screen to screen and range from very good to rather poor, but overall a pleasant effect is given. The sound isn't all that bad either and the program is an enjoyable one to play. Give it a whirl, it's damn good value for two quid.**

2 I liked playing this — the four different screens are all pretty challenging and very enjoyable to play. The graphics are fine, nothing special, but then what do you expect for a mere two quid? If you want a challenging game that's fun to play then go out and get this, it's very good.

Presentation 87%
Nice title screen and practice option.

Graphics 78%
Varies from screen to screen but overall not too bad.

Sound 71%
Quite good ditties and sound effects.

Playability 81%
The four screens are all varied and fun to play.

Addictive qualities 78%
The game might pall once you've completed it, but it's fun doing so.

Value for money 87%
When compared with more expenisive software it stands up very well.

Overall 80%
A very good game which is worth looking up.

CLASSIC INVADERS

Bubble Bus, £2.99 cassette

Back in 1978 the Invasion from space began and the green meanies from the heavens relentlessly attacked Earth bases. Now they have returned once again, and using your Amstrad as a battle interface you must repel the repulsive aggressors.

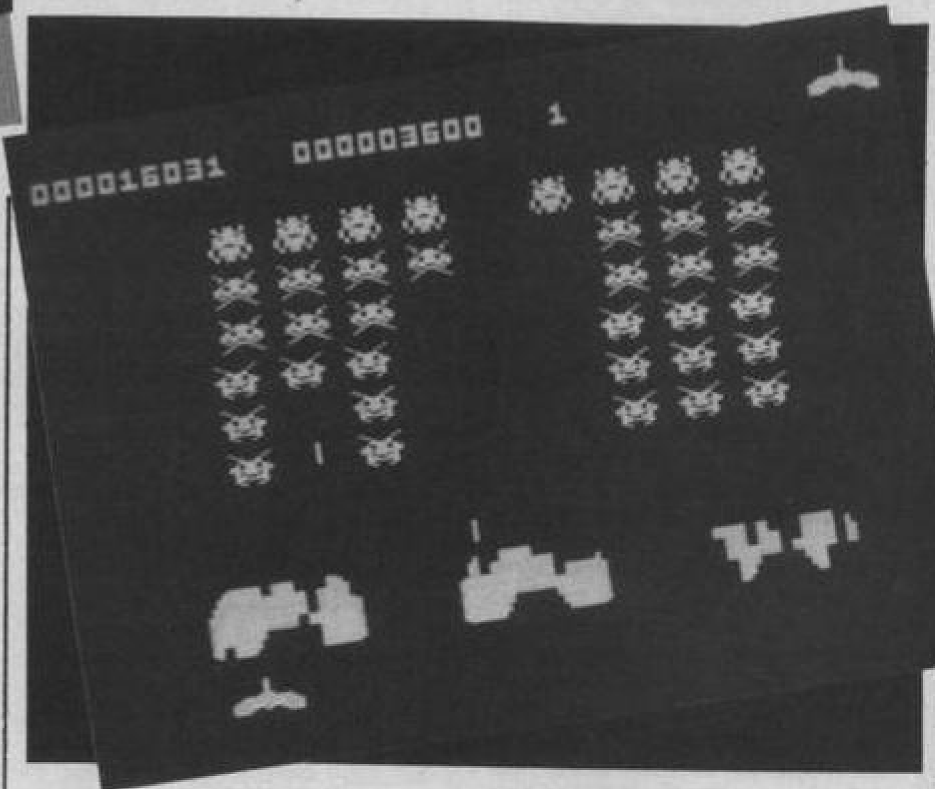
The bomb-dropping aliens attack in their classic formation of ten rows of six and move left and right across the screen. When they reach the edge of the screen they drop down a level and continue moving the other way. If they reach the bottom of the screen the Earth is deemed successfully invaded.

But, they didn't bank on your defensive skills. Armed with your Super Mark I laser cannon you can move left and right and blast all the aliens one by one until all are dead, a task made more difficult by the aliens speeding up as their numbers diminish. Just above your laser are three houses which can be sheltered under when alien aggression becomes too much.

If you manage to destroy them all then another wave begins its attack and so on. Every so often a command ship whizzes across the top of the screen and if this is shot then extra points are reaped.

You start the game with three laser bases, but extra ones can be earned at regular point intervals.

2 The Invaders return with a vengeance! I really love playing this and it takes me back to the summer holidays of my youth when video games were new. This version is a lot better than the original — more colourful, faster and meaner and it has some great tunes on its title screen. I heartily recommend that you go out and buy this brilliant piece of nostalgia.



CRITICISM

1 **This is certainly a classic — the presentation is really smart with a nice title screen complete with excellent music, but I felt that a few more options would have given it that something extra special. The graphics are great and include some very detailed baddies to shoot out of the sky. Even though the idea's very old the gameplay is still there and it's well worth buying.**

Presentation 87%
Really pretty title screen and attract mode.

Graphics 80%
Fast, smooth and colourful aliens.

Sound 88%
Wonderful title screen tune and ditties in between attacking waves.

Playability 88%
Left, right and fire — the most simple video controls . . .

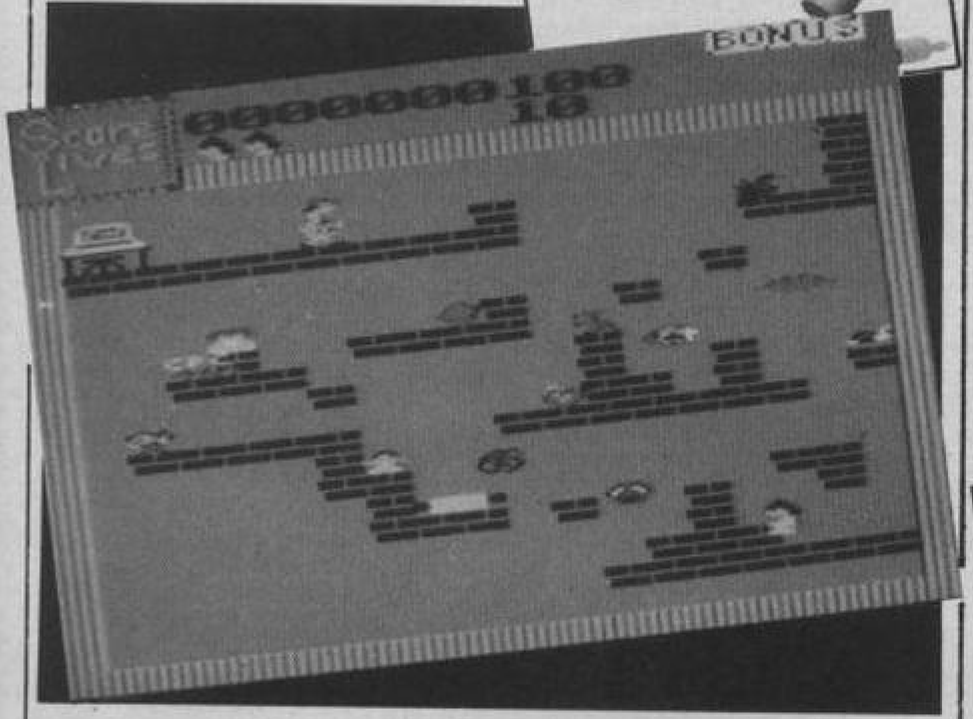
Addictive qualities 89%
but actually destroying the waves is a tough task.

Value for money 87%
Three quid for a tasty slice of the past.

Overall 85%
A brilliant game and one which will be loaded again and again — a real classic.

VOODOO RAGE

Voodoo
RAGE



Antartic, £1.99 cassette

Your room-mate has an obsession for playing computers, and his mania has caused both you and he to be sucked into a huge mega-puter console that lies hidden in another dimension. Instantly your boffin pal starts fiddling with it and you must stop him, there's no reason why, but you must.

There are two ways to do so — make your way through the twenty room complex, locate a rolling pin and tap him over the head with it, although if you hit him you must make sure he's playing with the computer otherwise he'll kill you. The other way to stop him is by pressing the CTRL key and have a *Voodoo Rage*, which makes you invincible for a short period of time. Throughout your mission your progress is hampered by the presence of a load nasties which float about the screens, touch one and you'll lose one of your three lives.

The game is played similarly to *Manic Miner* with left/right/jump ability being granted to your man. To progress through the screens you must pick up all the household articles, and once that has been done you're whizzed automatically to the next screen.

CRITICISM

1 **The packaging and instructions are fine, but the game is better left alone. *Voodoo Rage* is a version of the classic *Manic Miner* with nice and colourful graphics which look too square and unreal. As far as I could see *Voodoo Rage* is an old game in new packaging and if I were you I'd wait until Antartic bring out a new type of game.**

2 This game is complete and utter garbage. The story on the inlay could have been written by a five year old and the graphics look like they've been programmed by someone that age too. The game theme is an age old one and something I'd seen the back of. Unfortunately it seems not. Artic think that Newsfield have got something against them, but if they keep producing unambitious mindless drivel like this then they'll continue to get bad reviews.

Presentation 49%
No title screen to speak of and no options.

Graphics 22%
Colourful, but so is a road accident.

Sound 9%
About the most BASIC you can get out of an Amstrad.

Playability 9%
Cookability is the beauty of gas. Playability isn't the beauty of this.

Addictive qualities 8%
Load it once and scrub the cassette.

Value for money 13%
A bit expensive for a watch and wipe game.

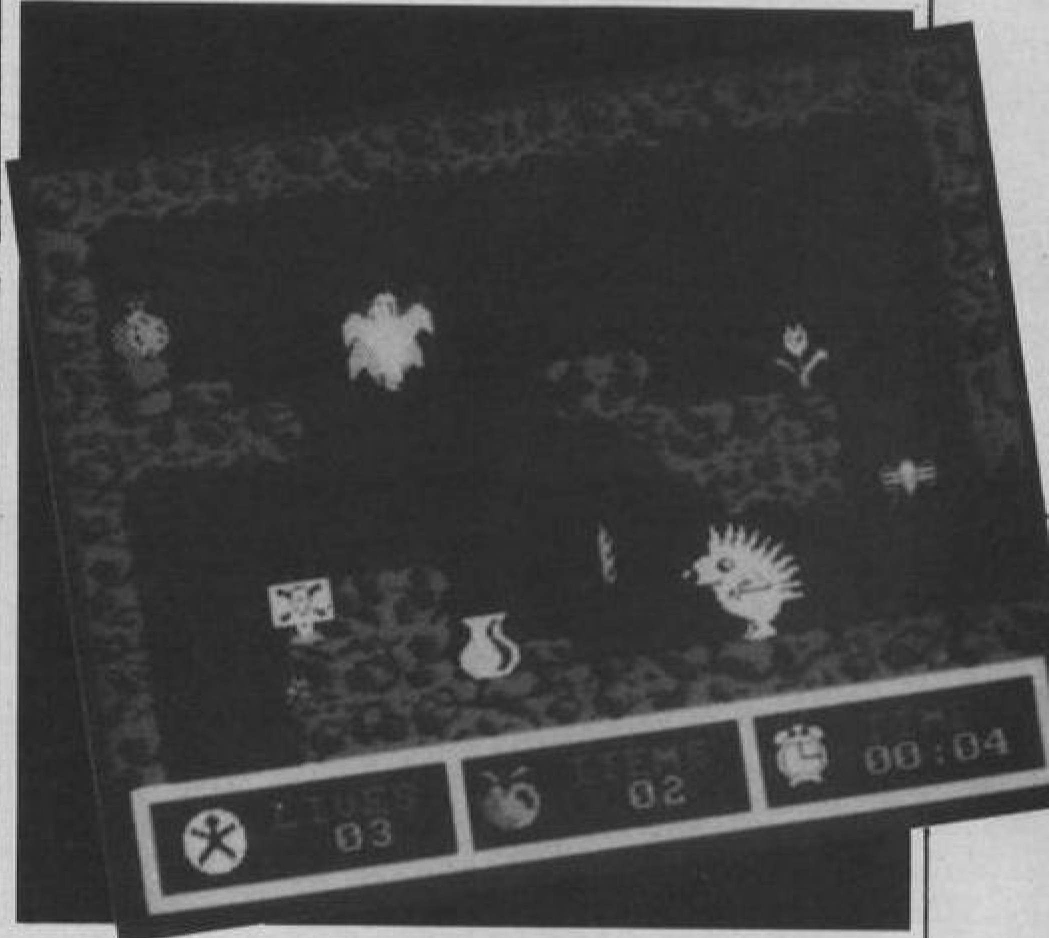
Overall 10%
An expensive way to tell people not to buy your next game.

SPIKY HAROLD

Firebird, £1.99 cassette

Poor *Spiky Harold* is tired. Winter is a'coming and he cares not for rain, snow, sleet or even Christmas. He just wants to sleep through it all and awaken when the weather has once again become warm. First, though, Harold has to beef himself up with food otherwise he won't survive his extended sleep, so off he goes in search of edible substances.

You're given left/right and jumping control over the punky hedgehog and must guide him around the fifty seven flick screens adjacent to his home. One piece of food is found in each screen and Harold can pick it up by walking into it. The only problem is that other woodland animals troll about the screens too, and if Harold touches one then he loses one of his eighteen lives! Also the game is played against time — if he takes over twenty four hours (game time) to complete the game then a frost falls and he catches terminal pneumonia, not a way for a hedgehog to go! Once he's collected all the food then he can trudge back to bed for a jolly nice kip.



CRITICISM

1 **The only real moan I have with this program is that it's a little too hard, in fact some of the screens seem impossible to complete. The graphics are pretty good and there are lots of nicely animated characters which move about quite well. The backgrounds aren't too bad either and are quite jolly and detailed. The sound is fairly good, a decent tune and the odd spot effect here and there. At two quid I feel I can recommend it . . .**

2 This is a very difficult game, but not one that I could say I particularly disliked. Harold is a charming fella who's nicely animated as he trogs around the numerous screens. The other graphics are fine and the sound isn't too bad at all. If you like platform style arcade adventures then take a look at it, it's good value.

Presentation 79%
Nice title screen and define keys option.

Graphics 80%
Nice animation on Harold and the rest of the animals and the backdrops are fine.

Sound 83%
'English Country Garden' on the title screen and some decent sound effects.

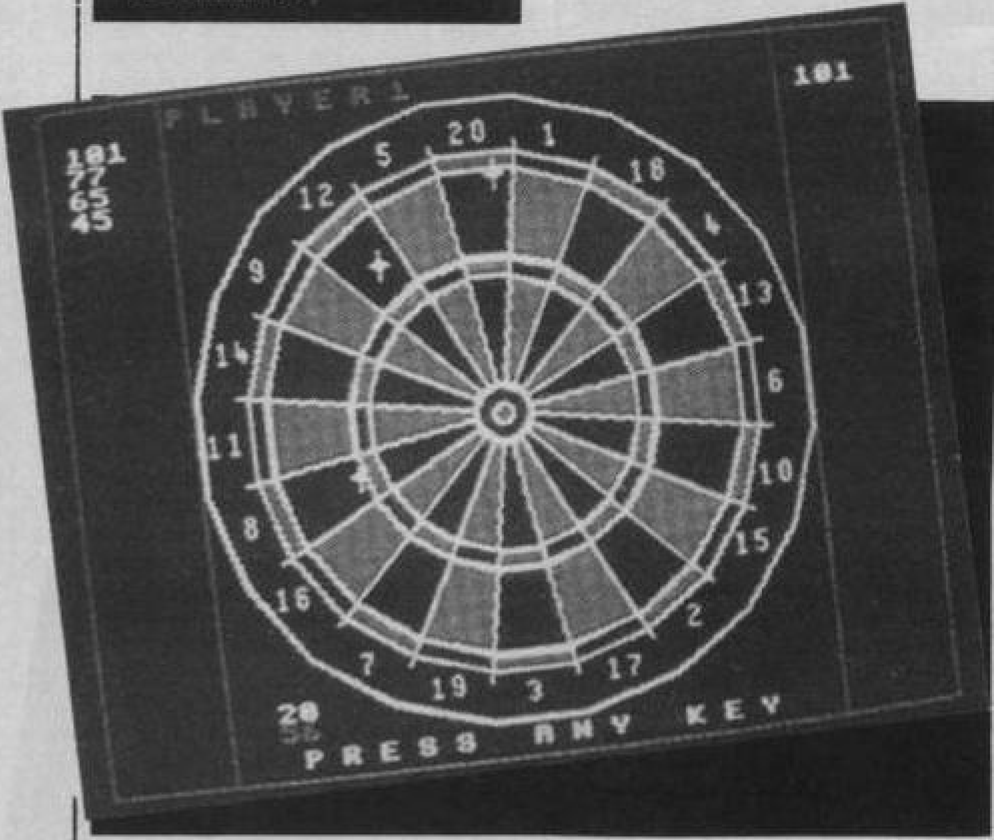
Playability 77%
Very difficult to play, but you're given eighteen lives to play with.

Addictive qualities 79%
It's certainly fun running around the screens.

Value for money 85%
Cheap, and by no means nasty.

Overall 80%
If you like arcade adventure games then give it a whirl.

DARTS



Blue Ribbon, £1.99 cassette

This brings you to the ochey without the danger of nasty sharp thingies flying around. You have the choice of three game — the normal game of 501 (although this number can be changed for each player up to a total of 1001), round the board (with three levels of difficulty using singles, doubles or trebles and the bull) and lastly, cricket where player one will try to score as many 'runs' as possible whilst player two tries to take ten wickets by hitting the bull (the centre being two wickets and the outer bull being one). Once a player is out then the 'batter' and 'fielder' swap places. Full instructions for each game can be accessed from the main menu by pressing the ESCAPE key at any point in a game.

The board itself is the standard pub model and aiming the darts is done by moving a cross-hair cursor over flights the board until the right target is chosen. Easy eh? Well it's not quite so simple because the cursor fidget around and you must use all your skill to hit the fire button when the dart is over the particularly part of the board that you want to hit.

All scores are kept on screen with play alternating between the two players and cumulative totals kept of scores for each dart thrown (except if the board is missed).

CRITICISM

1 There are several sports that do not easily convert to the medium binary: cricket and, unfortunately, darts. The whole thing is written in basic but is actually quite fast so there are really no complaints about speed. Sound is sparse but then everyone is quiet when a match is on anyway. The biggest problem must be that darts is a game requiring a skill very different to joystick or keyboard technique so I feel that the whole programme is wasted on a subject that will not appeal to darts players

2 For me, doing a darts program on a computer is a waste of time, and after seeing this 'simulation' my opinion is only strengthened. This game is simple, boring and really doesn't have anything in common with it's pub counterpart. If you like darts you might like to give this a whirl, but really you're better off saving up a little more money and purchasing the real thing.

Presentation 72%
Instructions can be accessed any time and the game is well laid out generally.

Graphics 38%
Standard darts board and little else.

Sound 11%
Virtual silence, apart from about three notes when a game finishes.

Playability 51%
Very simple to play . . .

Addictive qualities 42%
but the game is so simple it soon bores.

Value for money 54%
Cheap and simple.

Overall 49%
If you like darts try it, but don't expect much.

MOLECULE MAN

Mastertronic, £1.99 cassette

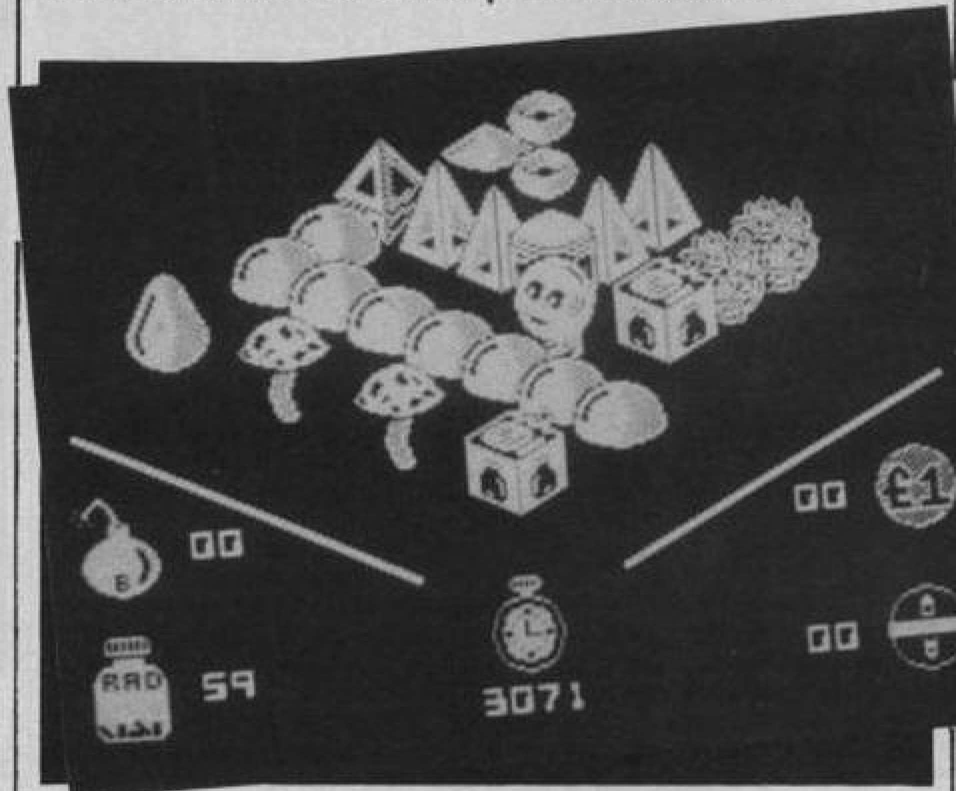
Imagine it — you're sitting there having your tea when, suddenly, you turn into a *Molecule Man*, trapped within a nightmarish maze contaminated by radiation. The radiation is gradually shortening your life and the only way to escape is via the teleporter, although it can only be used when sixteen circuits have been found and installed in it.

The only way to stay alive under these conditions is by taking anti-radiation pills every couple of seconds. These run out very quickly and the only way more can be obtained is by picking up the money scattered around the maze and using it in the vending machines dotted around.

This isn't the only problem — bombs need to be found so that maze walls can be destroyed, allowing access to new sections of the landscape. These cost money too, so when *Molecule Man* has found his money he must decide whether to spend it money on extra life-giving pills or bombs. The status area keeps tabs on the number of bombs, tablets, coins and pieces of transporter circuit MM is carrying.

The screen is made up of a variety of strange shapes that mark out the boundaries of the maze, which vary from traffic cones to magic toadstools — each screen is different. Once you come to the edge of one screen, *Molecule Man* automatically trundles to the next one in his search for the way out.

If you become bored a Maze designer is provided so that you can redesign the playing area and load it in another time.



CRITICISM

1 What a good budget game *Molecule Man* is. The graphics are well up to scratch, with lots of big, detailed characters that wobble around the maze in a very jolly manner. The idea of including a maze designer is a great idea and it lengthens the life span of the game tremendously. I really enjoyed playing this and it's well worth opening your wallet for.

2 This is an excellent release from Mastertronic — a full 3D game complete with a maze designer for only two quid! How do they do it? The graphics are very good indeed and the game is a very playable and addictive one! It's nice to see decent budget stuff and I hope Mastertronic release more stuff of this quality.

Presentation 92%
Nice title screen and excellent maze designer.

Graphics 87%
Effective monochrome 3D and nice sprites.

Sound 14%
Two percent for each one.

Playability 88%
Trolling round the maze in search of money and vending machines is surprisingly enjoyable.

Addictive qualities 83%
Once you get going you'll want to escape.

Value for money 90%
Well worth two hundred pennies.

Overall 82%
An excellent release from Mastertronic.

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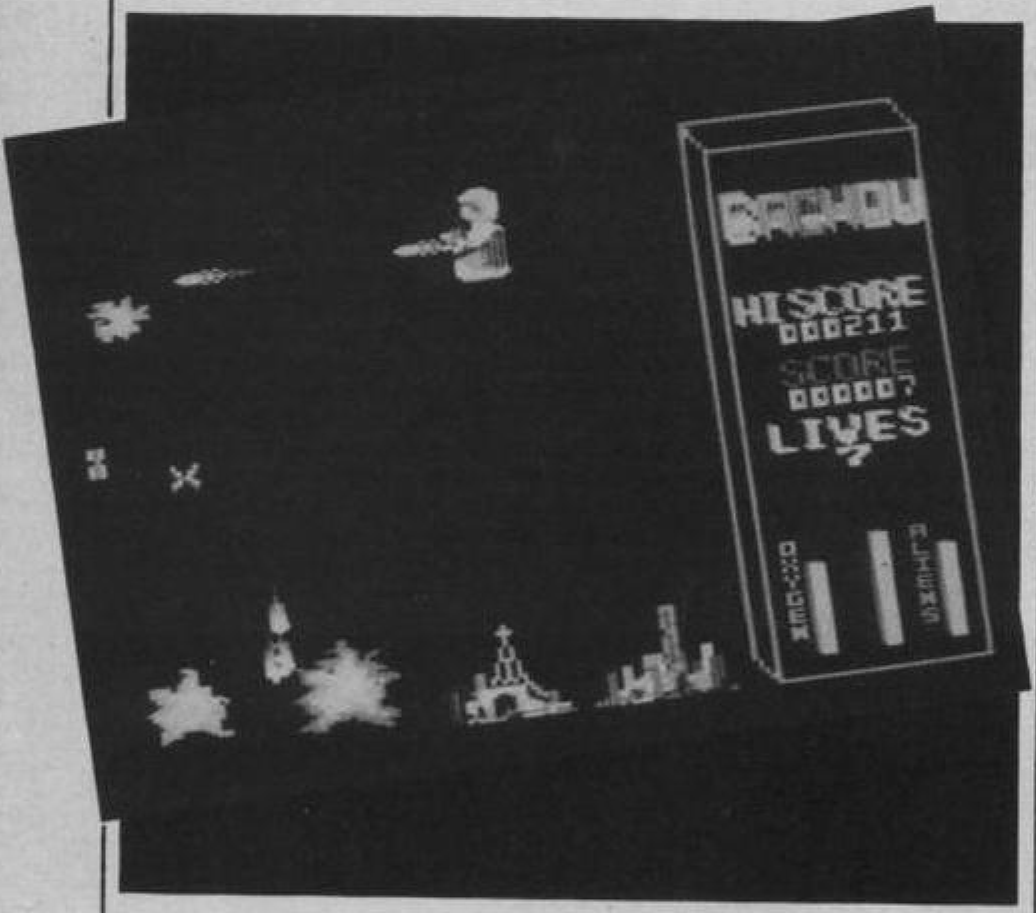


Central Solutions, 99p cass

Eeeeek! Evil aliens are invading the Earth and bombing our good cities and there is only one person who can save us: you. So, swiftly climbing intp your 'it can fly anywhere on the screen' spaceship you prepare to do battle.

The city is shown at the bottom of the screen and the aliens come on from the left and proceed to drop bombs on it. This is where you come into the fray and you have to zoom about the screen and shoot them down. Their attack continues until you shoot enough of them to progress to the next screen or they bomb the city flat (game over). Contact with any of the aliens causes you to lose one of your seven lives, so dodging is the order of the day.

On the right hand side of the screen is a status area displaying your score and three bar charts showing the amount of ammo, oxygen and aliens you have damaged prejudicially. When the 'shot aliens' bar reaches zero you progress to the next, more difficult screen, but if the others diminish to zero you die. It's possible to top them up, just fly into the parcels which float onto the screen every so often.

2 *One of the first 'play and wipe games'! Play it once and wipe over it with something better like a BASIC graph plotter. The graphics are very poor and flicker as they jerk over the screen and the sound is an aural assault. Even at 99p this doesn't offer good value for money — you could buy C&VG, type in one of their listings (which would be much better) and you'll still be left with lavvy paper for later use. Avoid it.*

CRITICISM

1 There's no doubt about it — this game is dire. All it offers is shooting indescribable little objects which flicker and wobble about the screen. The sound is poor too and I doubt if the program will appeal to anyone unless they are a mindless zombie who thinks that counting perforations in tea bags if fun. For your sanity's sake, don't buy this.

Presentation 34%
Crummy title screen and no options.

Graphics 19%
Nice explosions, but the sprites are dire.

Sound 7%
A few explosions . . . boom.

Playability 13%
Not much.

Addictive qualities 6%
Look at it. play it. Throw it away.

Value for money 24%
Only 50p more than a blank cassette . . .

Overall 8%
BASICally atrocious.

RADZONE

Mastertronic, £1.99 cass

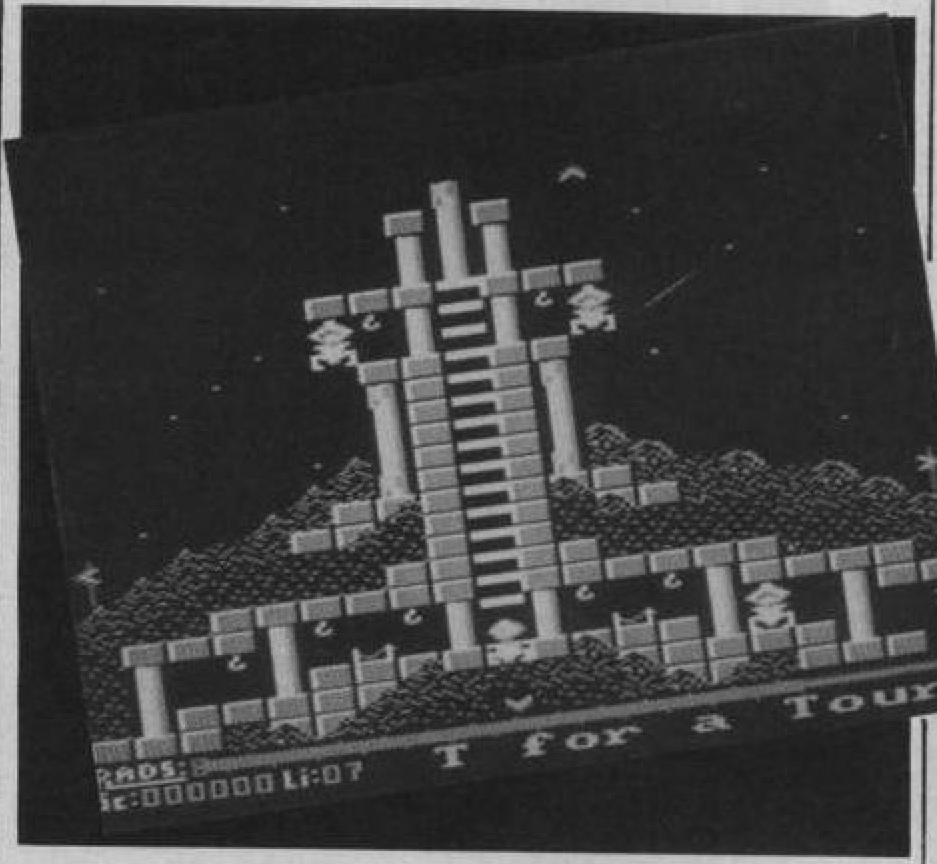
Once upon a time a bunch of pioneers landed on a newfound planet and colonised it. All went well until their nuclear reactor Chernobyled and blew up, contaminating everything in sight and blasting objects all over the landscape. The inhabitants of the planet left and the place became desolate for thousands of years.

Years later you hear of this and decide to go there and try to clear up the mess so the planet can be recolonised, so donning your protective raditation suit, off you go.

Radzone is a flick screen collect em up and you must go through all the screens and, using your special suit, stabilize every object on the landscape. You can move anywhere on the planet as long as constructions or ground allow you to do so and you're also given jumping ability to leap up steps etc. Throughout the game radiation is constantly absorbed, shown at the bottom of the screen on an ever increasing bar. When the bar reaches its maximum you die, but if you manage to stabilize all objects on a certain screen it becomes radiation free, allowing you to return there to recouperate.

The radioactivity has made the occupants completely loopy and they attack if you get near. If they touch you then you absorb loads of radiation, so steer well clear of any nasties.

2 *The most stunning features of this program are the great graphics and sound. Unfortunately the game itself doesn't live up to the standards set by the aforementioned, and soon becomes frustrating to play. It isn't a particularly good buy and if you want a good budget game then look at the others in the Mastertronic range.*



CRITICISM

1 For a budget game *Radzone* is very pretty and well presented, although the way you have to define your keys half way through loading is rather poor. The graphics are colourful, and includes entertaining bas relief effects on some screens. The nice tunes help but because the pace of *Radzone* is rather leisurely I feel it will not appeal to anyone but an avid arcade adventure player.

Presentation 57%
Redefining the keys halfway through loading is completely stupid, but otherwise it's average.

Graphics 81%
Very good use of colour and there are some nice sprites.

Sound 87%
Numerous quality tunes help play along.

Playability 67%
There is no clear definition where you can actually go on the landscape.

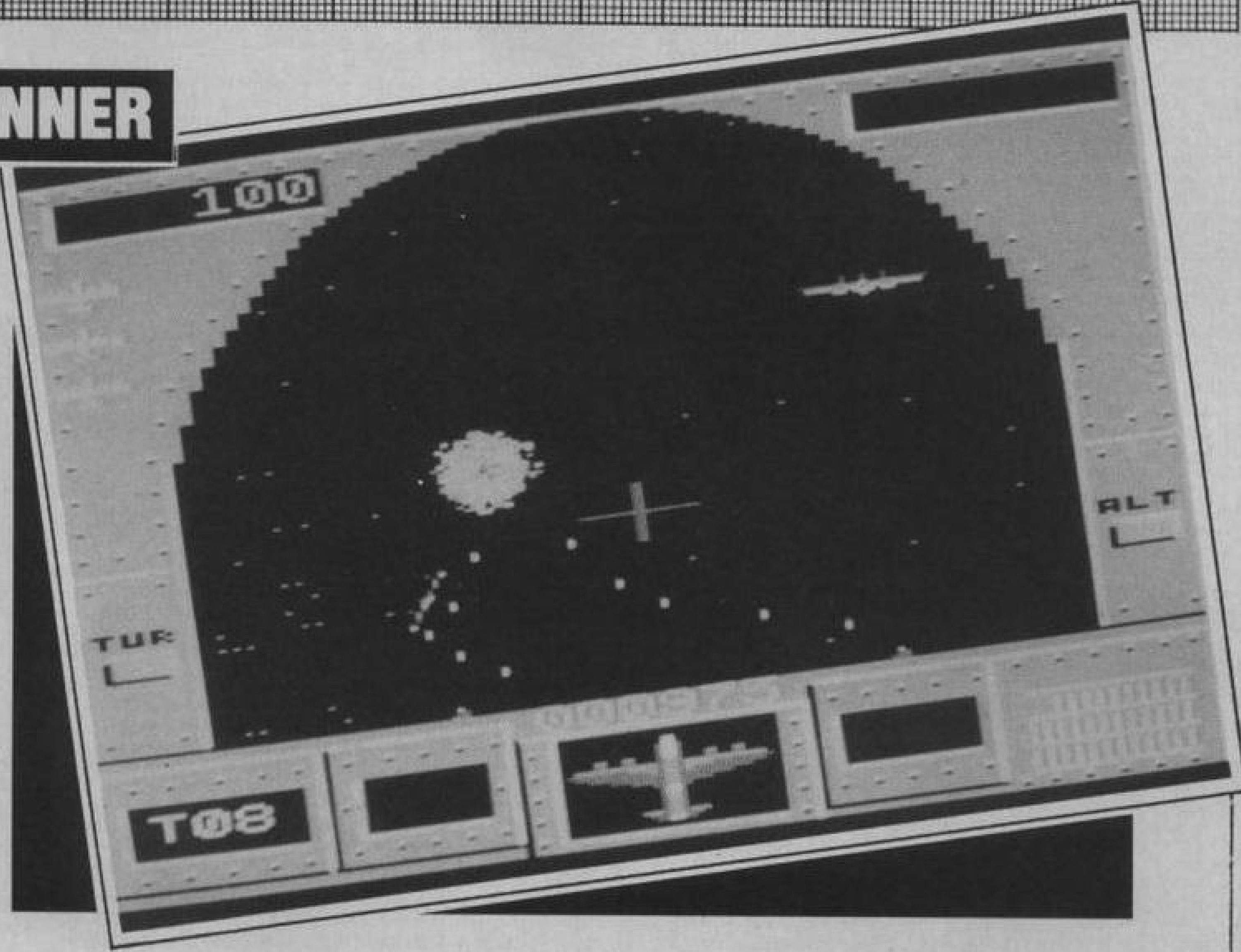
Addictive qualities 68%
The graphics initially attract, but only an avid arcade adventurer will continue playing.

Value for money 71%
A cheapie, but not particularly a goodie.

Overall 65%
Competent, but there are better budget buys than this.

NIGHT GUNNER

ONLY ACES SURVIVE IN
NIGHT GUNNER
AMSTRAD
DIGITAL INTEGRATION



**Digital Integration,
£7.95 cassette,
£13.95 disk**

NIGHT GUNNER is a flying shoot 'em up where you take on the role of a plane's gunner and bomb aimer having to defend the aircraft from enemy attack on the way to, and hopefully from, the target where it will be your job to drop the bombs or release the rockets onto the target.

The program runs in one of the three languages of English, German or French, chosen at the beginning, and all protected by Softlock meaning that once loaded, a code must be entered before the game will play. This code is included on the inlay of the program and you have three chances to get it right.

The menu screen gives options for one or two players and a skill level can be chosen from one to four. The view from the turret also displays the players current score along with how many of the three lives are remaining, a turret warning light, an altitude warning light and the amount of ammunition left, whether it be bullets, rockets or bombs. The T in the leftmost window shows time to target and the B the amount of time left over the bombing target.

On the first screen you are seated in the plane's turret, resplendent with machine gun and panoramic view of the night sky. Unfortunately the nocturnal beauty of the cosmos is punctuated by the passage of enemy fighters the pilots of which are determined to reduce your sight-seeing jaunts permanently. To aim the guns at the enemy fighters, barrage balloons or the bonus plane that appears from time to time, the red gunsights must be moved using either the joystick or keyboard and pressing fire will release a stream of tracer bullets which will mimic the real thing, taking time to reach the target and as such seemingly sweeping across the screen until finding their mark and resulting in a large flash as the enemy bites the dust.

The fighters come in oblivious to this deterrent however, firing at your plane, and any hits to your aircraft are shown by the immediate flashing of the screen border. Any damage is shown on the representative plane at the bottom of the screen which is green when all new and shiny but with parts turning yellow as damage is wreaked upon them and turning red if a particular part of the plane is destroyed. Flight is still possible with certain areas of the plane destroyed but will manifest themselves in a reduction in handling.

Once through the enemy fighters you will move to a bombing or rocket ground attack which alternate as each successive mission is undertaken. In high altitude bombing you control the plane with the usual joystick directions with diving or climbing affecting the speed of the aircraft and in low level rocket attacks mimicking this action but with the altitude being shown in the small right hand window and the best method being to gain height, then dive at the target, release a rocket and then pull out of the dive before hitting the ground and losing a life. All points scored depend upon the distance the target is from the plane when hit. If you prove to be a real wizzard ace then the ultimate mission will test you to your full potential.

This mission is straight from the Dambusters, with the bomb aimer having to adjust the height until two spotlights form a figure of eight. Then, after lining up two bars in the centre of two towers, releasing the bomb and crossing the fingers and wondering if there are enough bullets and aeroplane left in order to get back home . . .

Presentation 79%
Quite jolly title screen with a great highscore table.

Graphics 54%
Colourful, but poor sprites and interior of the plane is blocky.

Sound 49%
Dakka dakka boom sound effects.

Playability 51%
The aiming cursor is slow and wobbly thus making the game a little dull to play.

Addictive qualities 52%
Initially interesting but becomes dull after a couple of games.

Value for money 54%
People have paid with more than money to become tail gunners.

Overall 55%
An unusual, but average game.

CRITICISM

1

I must admit that I expected one of Digital Integration's superb flight sims to be hidden somewhere in this program but even they must get fed up with swooping around the skies from time to time. No, what we have here is a well produced shoot em down and blow em to smithereens show. The sound is good, especially the noise of the machine guns and the whistle of dropped bombs. The low level rocket attacks are a bit rough, both in terms of trickiness and graphics, with targets being a bit blocky. Overall the graphics are okay, with the attacking planes being the best. At the price you get a very reasonable game.

2

When I first started playing this I thought it was going to be quite good, but after a Lego plane had flown jerkily towards me I soon changed my mind. After playing for a little longer and attacking Lego lorries I soon became bored and went to play something else. The graphics, although colourful, are very poor and the sound is nothing to write home about. If you want a good shoot em up then go out and get something else.

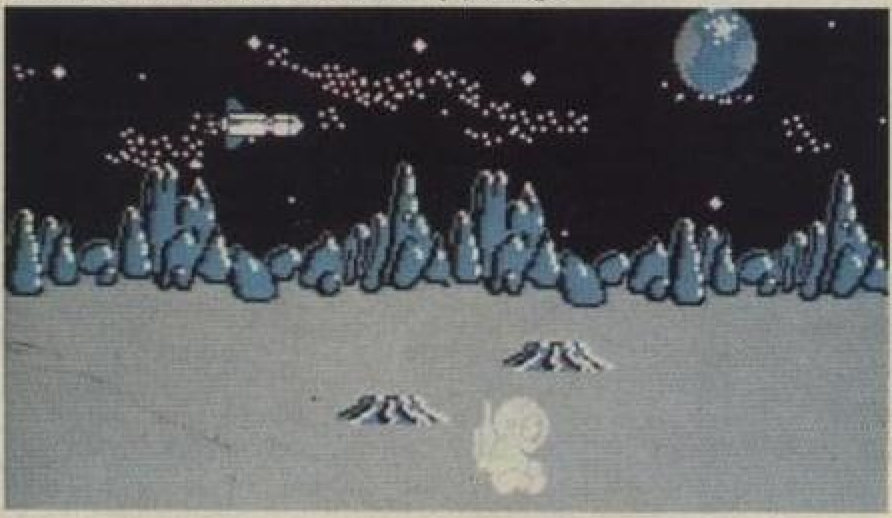
3

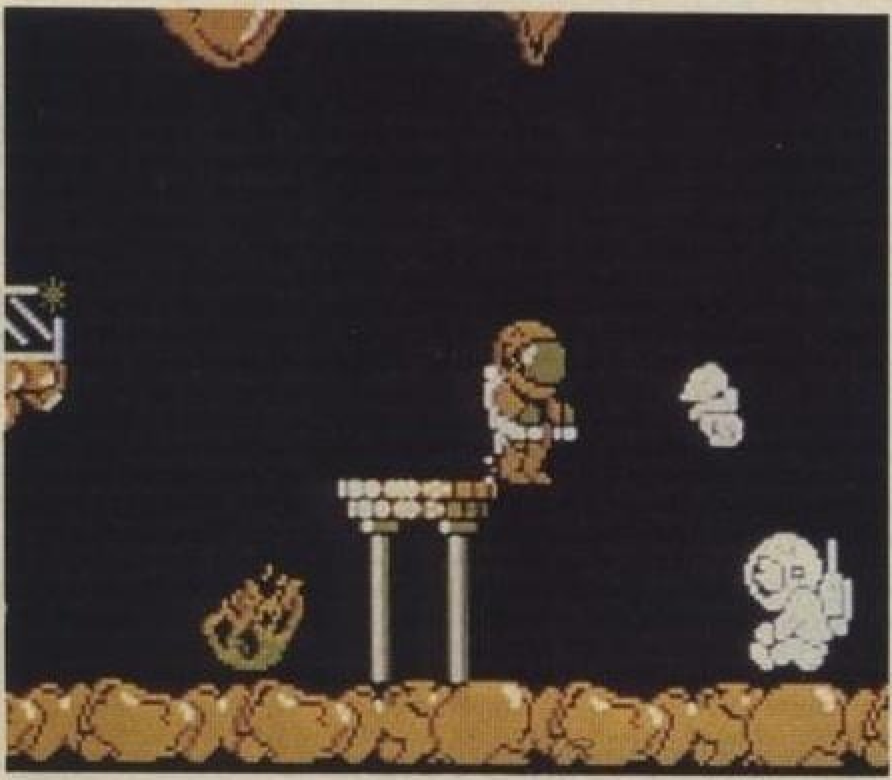
This is your basic shoot em up game for the Amstrad where you have to destroy anything and everything. The graphics are poor and tend to spoil the game which will only appeal to a newcomer to home computers or to a real shoot em up addict. Overall I thought it was a disappointing game from Digital Integration.

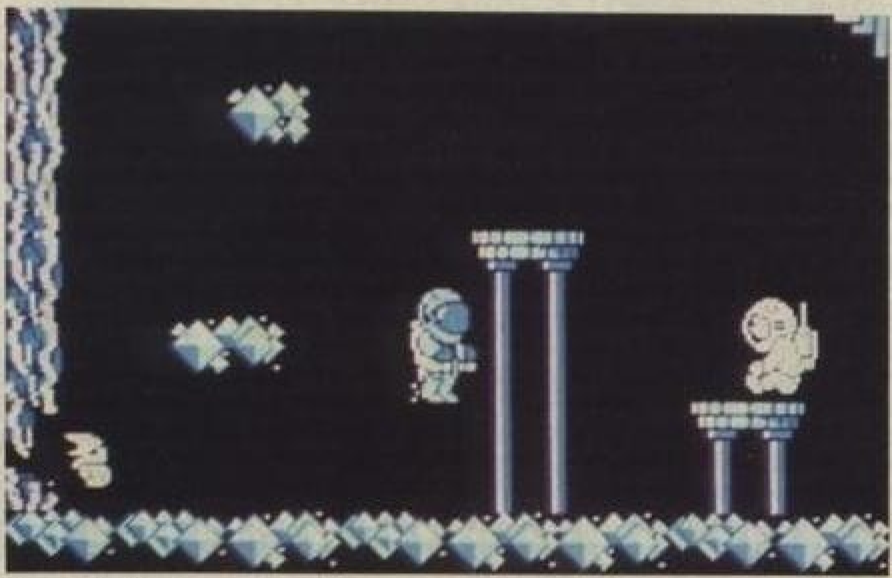
NODES OF YESOD

Odin, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk

One day the guys at Jodrell Bank were sitting down having a cuppa when suddenly all the alarms went off! An alien signal was being received — 'beep beep beeble beeble boop' went the alien signal. 'Gosh, quick swivel the radio dish' went the scientists. Soon they had tracked the source of the signal and all present were amazed at its origins — the centre of the Moon! Well, what could mankind do but send for 'Charlie' Fotheringham-Grunes, ace spaceman hero, and plonk him in a Moon-bound rocket to gather more information on the alien happenings.







The game begins just after Charles has landed on the Moon. Clad in his body-hugging flexible spacesuit Charlie has to climb down into the craters of the Moon and explore its interior. The aliens are certainly present en masse on **our** Moon and now all manner of really horrible creatures reside there. Most of them are pretty gribbly looking, but one, a nice friendly Moley matey likes you lots and helps you on your quest, although the velvety fella has to be caught first — if you hang about on the surface of the Moon Moley eventually pops his head out of a crater. If Charlie jumps onto the digging mammal it helps him complete his mission.

After trolling about for a bit Charles suddenly discovers a crystal alchiem. 'My gosh!' says he, 'one of the alchiems from the Monolith — no wonder strange things are afoot'. You see, this Monolith was discovered around 1999. Further excavations revealed crystal alchiems sitting underneath it, and although scientists could never work out why, it was believed that the alchiems served the Monolith in some sort of way. Now, the reason why signals were being generated was that all the alchiems had been moved by the aliens and this had set off some alarm. So, Charlie set about finding the eight alchiems so he could take them back to the Monolith and restore order again.

The game is played in flick screen style with Charlie obeying the laws of Moon gravity, ie falling when there is nothing under him to stop him doing so. Just because Charlie is on the Moon it doesn't mean that he can fall off high ledges without doing himself damage — if he falls too far he dies and loses one of his three lives.

The alien monsters beetle about the place and take an interest in what the Earthman is doing, they just want to be friends, but the trouble is that if they touch him their electrified bodies put a strain on his heart — too many touches and it's curtains for the hero. When things get a little strained (you can see for yourself by reading Charlie's heart-rate meter at the bottom of the screen) he sits down and recouperates for a while.

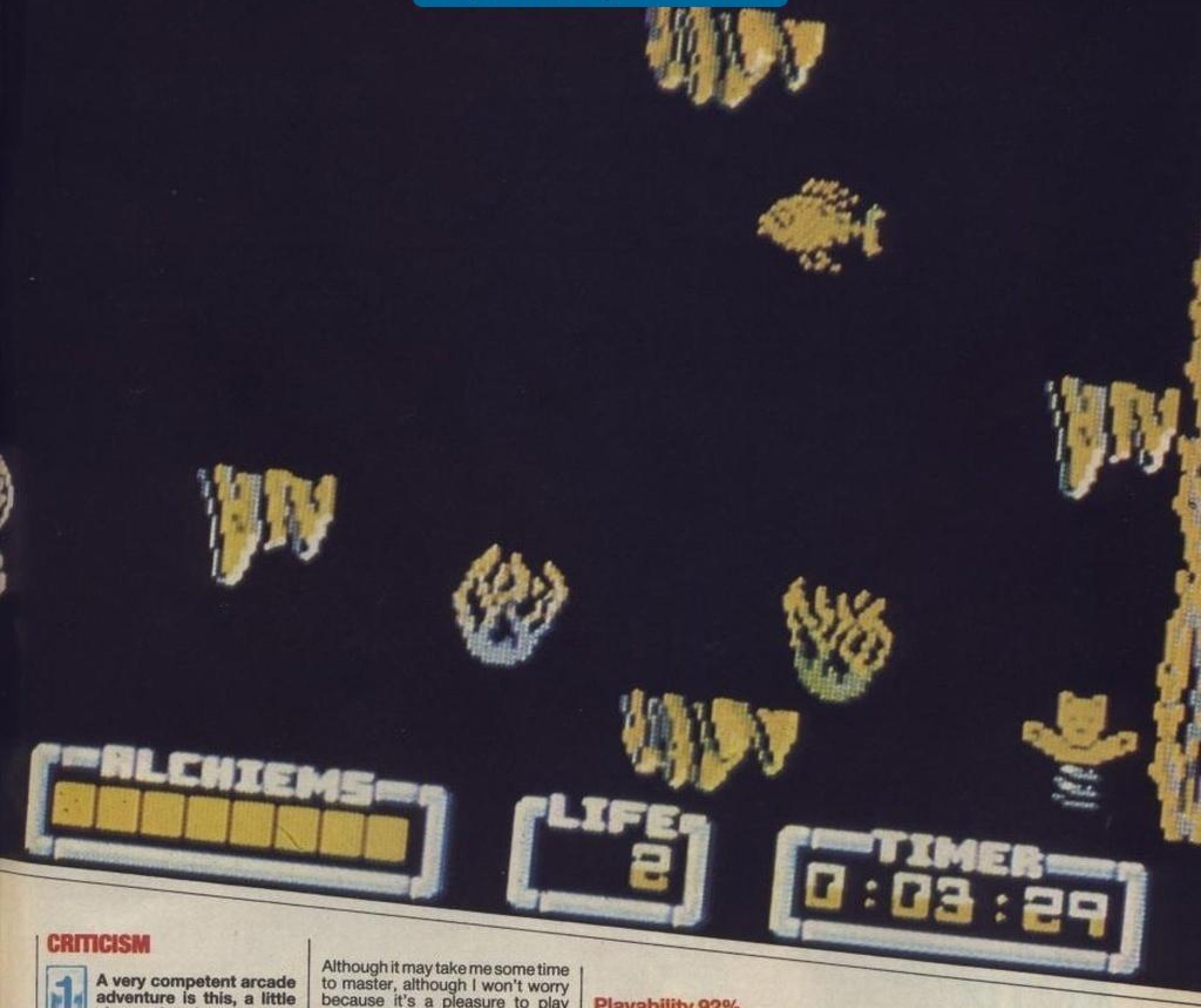
Moley-babes plays a very important part in the game and without him your task would be a fruitless one. Pushing up on the joystick brings the golfer's nightmare into action and you're able to move him anywhere on the screen (although Charlie has to stand still until Mole is recalled). Whizzing the Mole through any airborne aliens frightens them off and if he's moved next to a soft earth wall he digs through it, giving Charlie an extra escape route. Soft walls look no different to any other walls, so it's a case of trying Mole out to see if he can dig you out of a situation.

AMSTRAD CPC
NODES OF YESOD

Alchiems are found in the most inaccessable parts of the 256 screen Moon cavern system, so quite a bit of exploration is necessary before they can all be found. When found an alchiem can be picked up by walking over it and once picked up it's yours, well, until you meet the dead red spaceman. This rotten (ha ha) character pops up from time to time and swipes one of your alchiems if he touches you, so you have to avoid him at all costs.

Throughout the caverns there are many weird and wonderful things which can be used to help you in your quest or ruin your game if they get the chance. Whirlwinds for instance, if touched, transport you to another cavern in a different part of the game. There are also the added hazards of huge, deep shafts down which you can plummet and lose a life . . . mind you, there is one massive shaft you may tumble down arms flailing that has a powerful updraught allowing you to land softly. This updraught can also be used to transport you back up to the top again, just like a lift!

Finally, there are things called gravity sticks which you can use to help you along. These, when planted in the ground, cause a gravity field to be transmitted which results in the monsters having to leave the immediate vicinity — handy, especially when your life energy is at its lowest ebb.



CRITICISM

1 **A very competent arcade adventure is this, a little slower than I would have liked, but a great game nevertheless. The graphics are dead nice and some of the different parts of the cavern system are a real treat for the eyes. All the nasties are very imaginative and extremely nicely animated. The task laid down isn't an impossible one but I'm sure a map would help — it tends to be rather easy to get lost! Definitely one for the arcade adventurers' collection.**

2 Being very unfortunate in not ever having seen this game before on any other machine I can make no comparisons with other versions but just say how much I enjoyed playing it. Odin have a beautiful game here with superb graphics that are well animated and very neat — some locations are almost breath-taking. The little space mole is a real cutie and when the spaceman falls the back-peddling he does with his hands adds to the game's atmosphere, as does the catchy tune that plays in the background. The speed is just right and adds to the impression of low gravity and my overall impression is of a beautiful game that is highly playable and simple to get into. Although it may take me some time to master, although I won't worry because it's a pleasure to play such a pretty game.

3 *This game has had a lot of publicity and it's been a long time coming, but it has certainly been worth the wait. The whole program comes packaged in a lovely box with excellent instructions. The non-flickery graphics are very good and tunes are atmospheric, suiting the game well indeed. The whole program is highly playable and if you like arcade adventures you'll be glued to it for a considerable period of time. Overall an excellent game and one that is worthy of any Amster's collection.*

Presentation 89%

Great box, instructions and very pleasant title screen compete with music.

Graphics 90%

Lovely, well animated sprites, excellent backdrops and colour used thoughtfully throughout.

Sound 87%

One ditty on the title screen, one during the game and they're both excellent.

Playability 92%

Simplicity itself at the beginning, the objective completely the opposite.

Addictive qualities 93%

Once you start collecting the alchiems and getting to know your way around you won't leave it alone.

Value for money 86%

A little dear, but then the game is a little dear too.

Overall 90%

Take a trip to the Moon and go for them alchiems . . .

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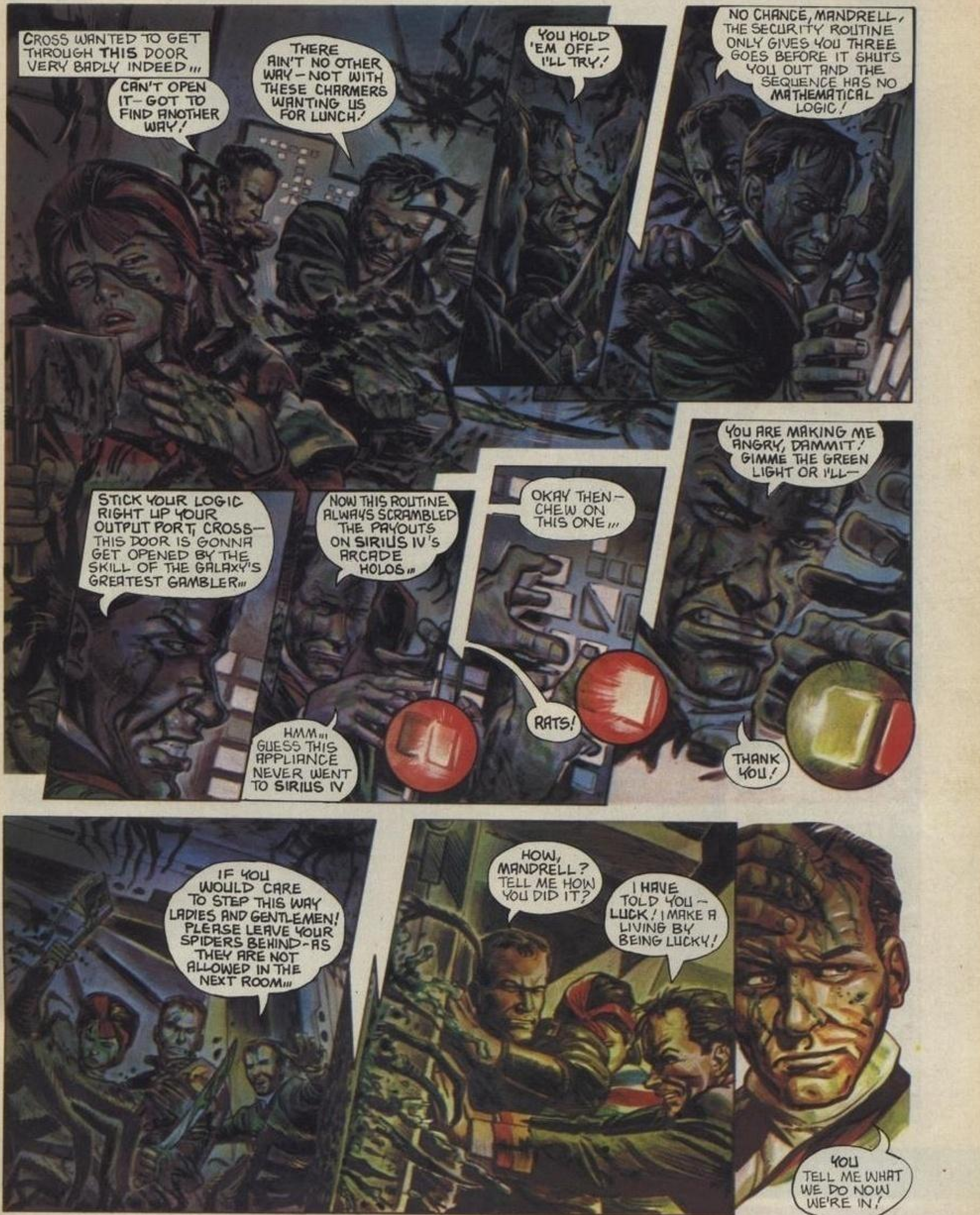
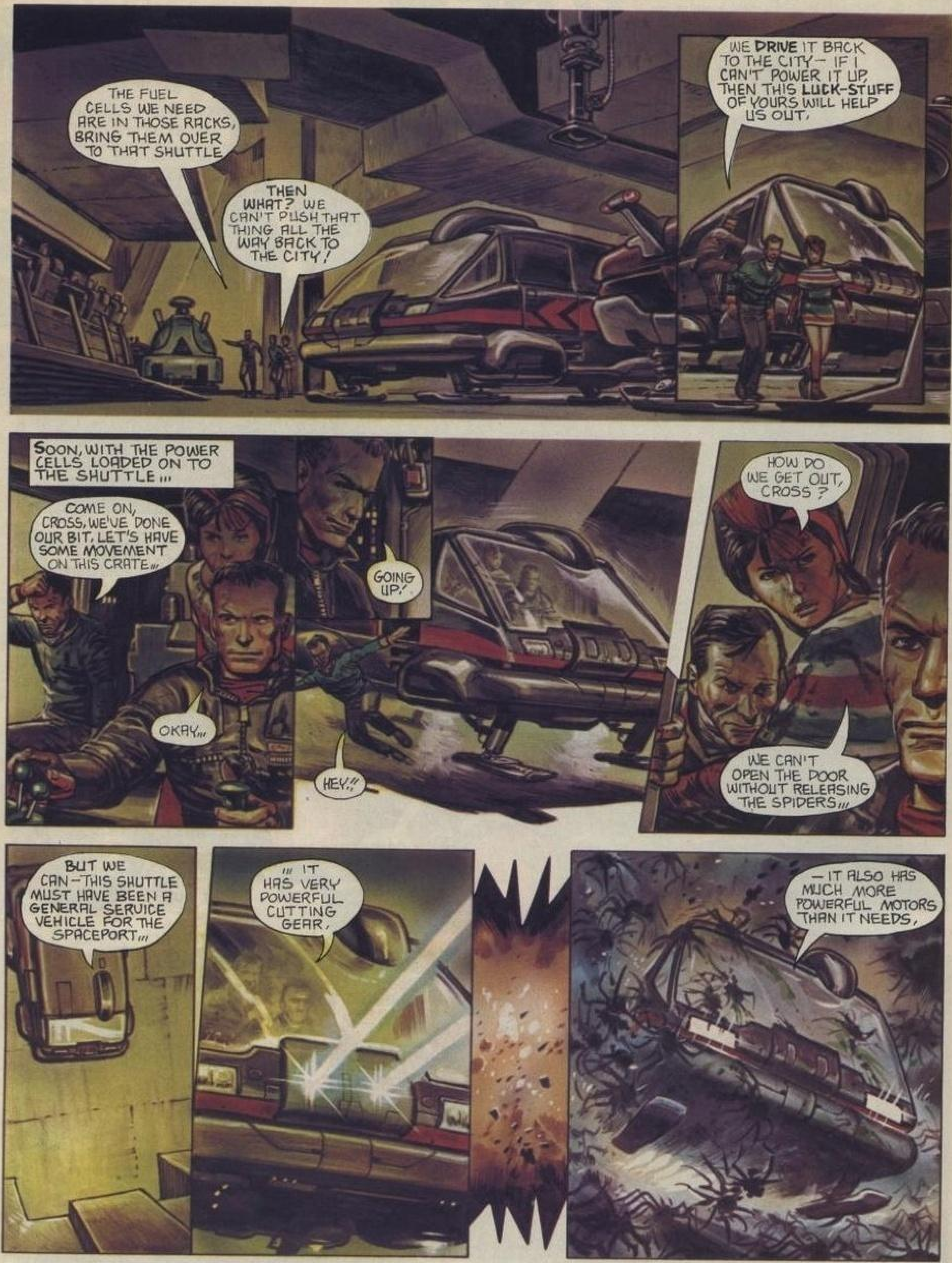
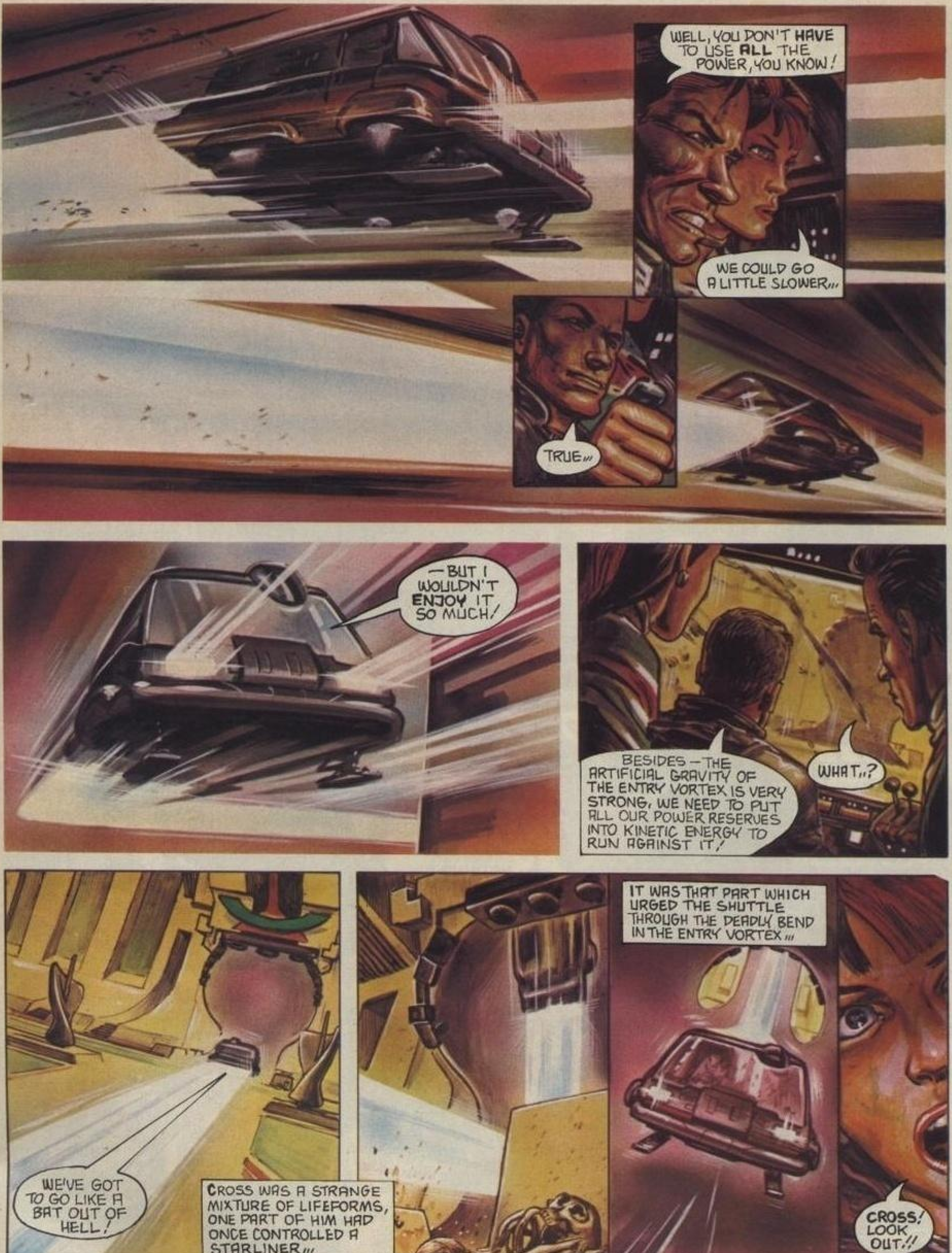
This universe runs according to a number of laws. One of them – 'Sod's Law' – states that doors are always locked when you have forgotten, or cannot find your key. Mr Sod might also have added that the likelihood of being attacked by mutant spiders is directly proportional to your desire to get through the door. . .

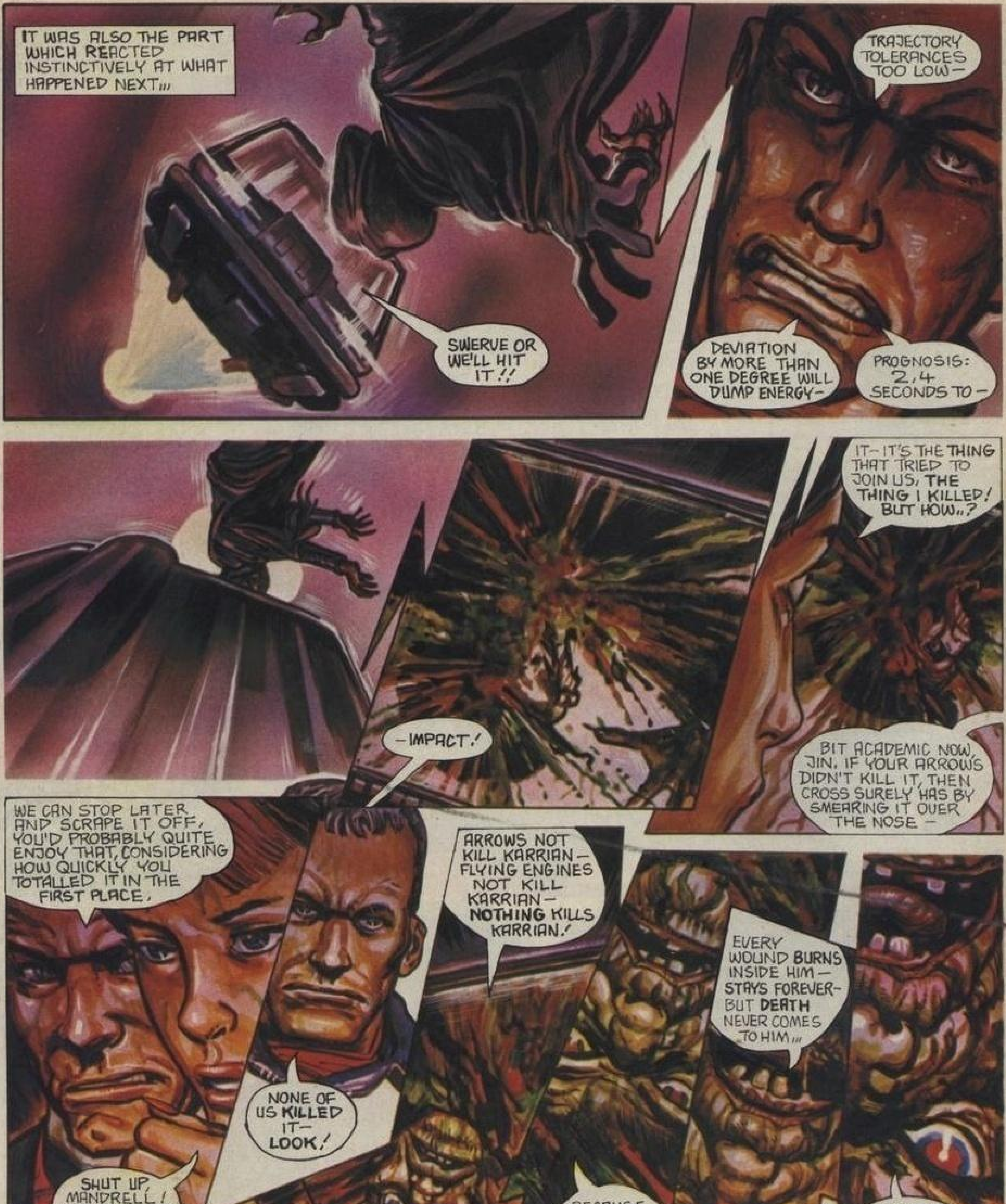
THE TERMINAL MAN


CROSS WANTED TO GET THROUGH THIS DOOR VERY BADLY INDEED...
CAN'T OPEN IT– GOT TO FIND ANOTHER WAY!
THERE AIN'T NO OTHER WAY – NOT WITH THESE CHARMERS WANTING US FOR LUNCH!
YOU HOLD 'EM OFF – I'LL TRY!
NO CHANCE, MANDRELL, THE SECURITY ROUTINE ONLY GIVES YOU THREE GOES BEFORE IT SHUTS YOU OUT AND THE SEQUENCE HAS NO MATHEMATICAL LOGIC!
STICK YOUR LOGIC RIGHT UP YOUR OUTPUT PORT, CROSS– THIS DOOR IS GONNA GET OPENED BY THE SKILL OF THE GALAXY'S GREATEST GAMBLER...
NOW THIS ROUTINE ALWAYS SCRAMBLED THE PAYOUTS ON SIRIUS IV's ARCADE HOLOS...
HMM... GUESS THIS APPLIANCE NEVER WENT TO SIRIUS IV
OKAY THEN– CHEW ON THIS ONE...
RATS!
YOU ARE MAKING ME ANGRY, DAMMIT! GIMME THE GREEN LIGHT OR I'LL–
THANK YOU!
IF YOU WOULD CARE TO STEP THIS WAY LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! PLEASE LEAVE YOUR SPIDERS BEHIND – AS THEY ARE NOT ALLOWED IN THE NEXT ROOM...
HOW, MANDRELL? TELL ME HOW YOU DID IT?
I HAVE TOLD YOU – LUCK! I MAKE A LIVING BY BEING LUCKY!
YOU TELL ME WHAT WE DO NOW WE'RE IN!


THE FUEL CELLS WE NEED ARE IN THOSE RACKS, BRING THEM OVER TO THAT SHUTTLE
THEN WHAT? WE CAN'T PUSH THAT THING ALL THE WAY BACK TO THE CITY!
WE DRIVE IT BACK TO THE CITY— IF I CAN'T POWER IT UP, THEN THIS LUCK-STUFF OF YOURS WILL HELP US OUT.
SOON, WITH THE POWER CELLS LOADED ON TO THE SHUTTLE...
COME ON, CROSS, WE'VE DONE OUR BIT. LET'S HAVE SOME MOVEMENT ON THIS CRATE...
OKAY...
GOING UP!
HEY!!
HOW DO WE GET OUT, CROSS?
WE CAN'T OPEN THE DOOR WITHOUT RELEASING THE SPIDERS...
BUT WE CAN—THIS SHUTTLE MUST HAVE BEEN A GENERAL SERVICE VEHICLE FOR THE SPACEPORT...
... IT HAS VERY POWERFUL CUTTING GEAR.
—IT ALSO HAS MUCH MORE POWERFUL MOTORS THAN IT NEEDS.

STORY BY KELVIN GOSNELL© DRAWN BY OLIVER FREY©


WELL, YOU DON'T **HAVE** TO USE **ALL** THE POWER, YOU KNOW!
WE COULD GO A LITTLE SLOWER...
TRUE...
—BUT I WOULDN'T **ENJOY** IT SO MUCH!
BESIDES — THE ARTIFICIAL GRAVITY OF THE ENTRY VORTEX IS VERY STRONG, WE NEED TO PUT ALL OUR POWER RESERVES INTO KINETIC ENERGY TO RUN AGAINST IT!
WHAT..?
WE'VE GOT TO GO LIKE A BAT OUT OF HELL!
CROSS WAS A STRANGE MIXTURE OF LIFEFORMS, ONE PART OF HIM HAD ONCE CONTROLLED A STARLINER...
IT WAS THAT PART WHICH URGED THE SHUTTLE THROUGH THE DEADLY BEND IN THE ENTRY VORTEX...
CROSS! LOOK OUT!!


IT WAS ALSO THE PART WHICH REACTED INSTINCTIVELY AT WHAT HAPPENED NEXT...
SWERVE OR WE'LL HIT IT!!
TRAJECTORY TOLERANCES TOO LOW—
DEVIATION BY MORE THAN ONE DEGREE WILL DUMP ENERGY—
PROGNOSIS: 2.4 SECONDS TO—
—IMPACT!
IT—IT'S THE THING THAT TRIED TO JOIN US, THE THING I KILLED! BUT HOW..?
BIT ACADEMIC NOW, JIN. IF YOUR ARROWS DIDN'T KILL IT, THEN CROSS SURELY HAS BY SMEARING IT OVER THE NOSE—
WE CAN STOP LATER AND SCRAPE IT OFF, YOU'D PROBABLY QUITE ENJOY THAT, CONSIDERING HOW QUICKLY YOU TOTALLED IT IN THE FIRST PLACE.
SHUT UP, MANDRELL! I HATED HAVING TO KILL IT BUT...
BE QUIET, BOTH OF YOU—
NONE OF US KILLED IT— LOOK!
ARROWS NOT KILL KARRIAN— FLYING ENGINES NOT KILL KARRIAN— NOTHING KILLS KARRIAN!
EVERY WOUND BURNS INSIDE HIM— STAYS FOREVER— BUT DEATH NEVER COMES TO HIM...
BECAUSE KARRIAN CANNOT DIE! THAT IS HIS CURSE— HE FEELS PAIN— OH YES, MUCH PAIN...!
KARRIAN BRINGS HIS FRIEND DEATH TO OTHERS...
—TO YOU!!

Next: End of a Quest

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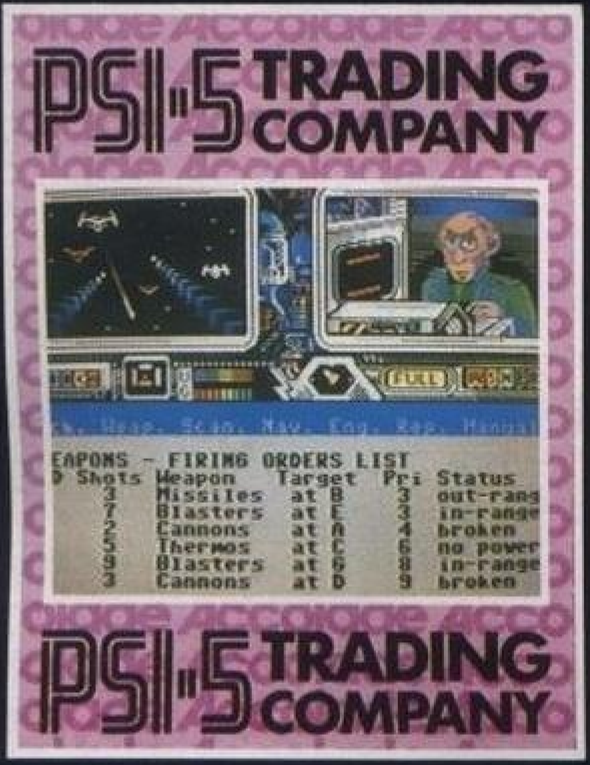

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EAPONS - FIRING ORDERS LIST
D Shots Weapon    Target  Pri Status
    3   Missiles  at B     3  out-rang
    7   Blasters  at E     3  in-range
    2   Cannons   at A     4  broken
    5   Thermos   at C     6  no power
    9   Blasters  at G     8  in-range
    3   Cannons   at D     9  broken
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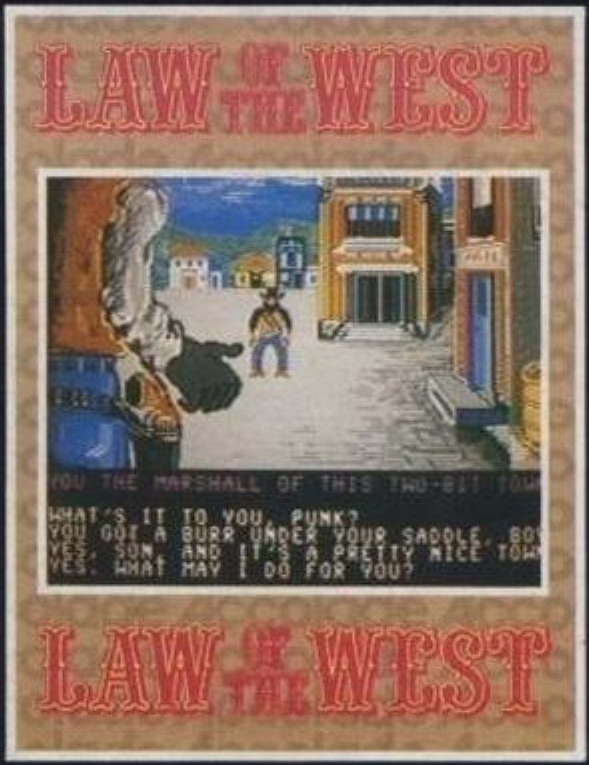

```
YOU THE MARSHALL OF THIS TWO-BIT TOW

WHAT'S IT TO YOU, PUNK?
YOU GOT A BURR UNDER YOUR SADDLE, BO
YES, SON, AND IT'S A PRETTY NICE TOW
YES. WHAT MAY I DO FOR YOU?
```

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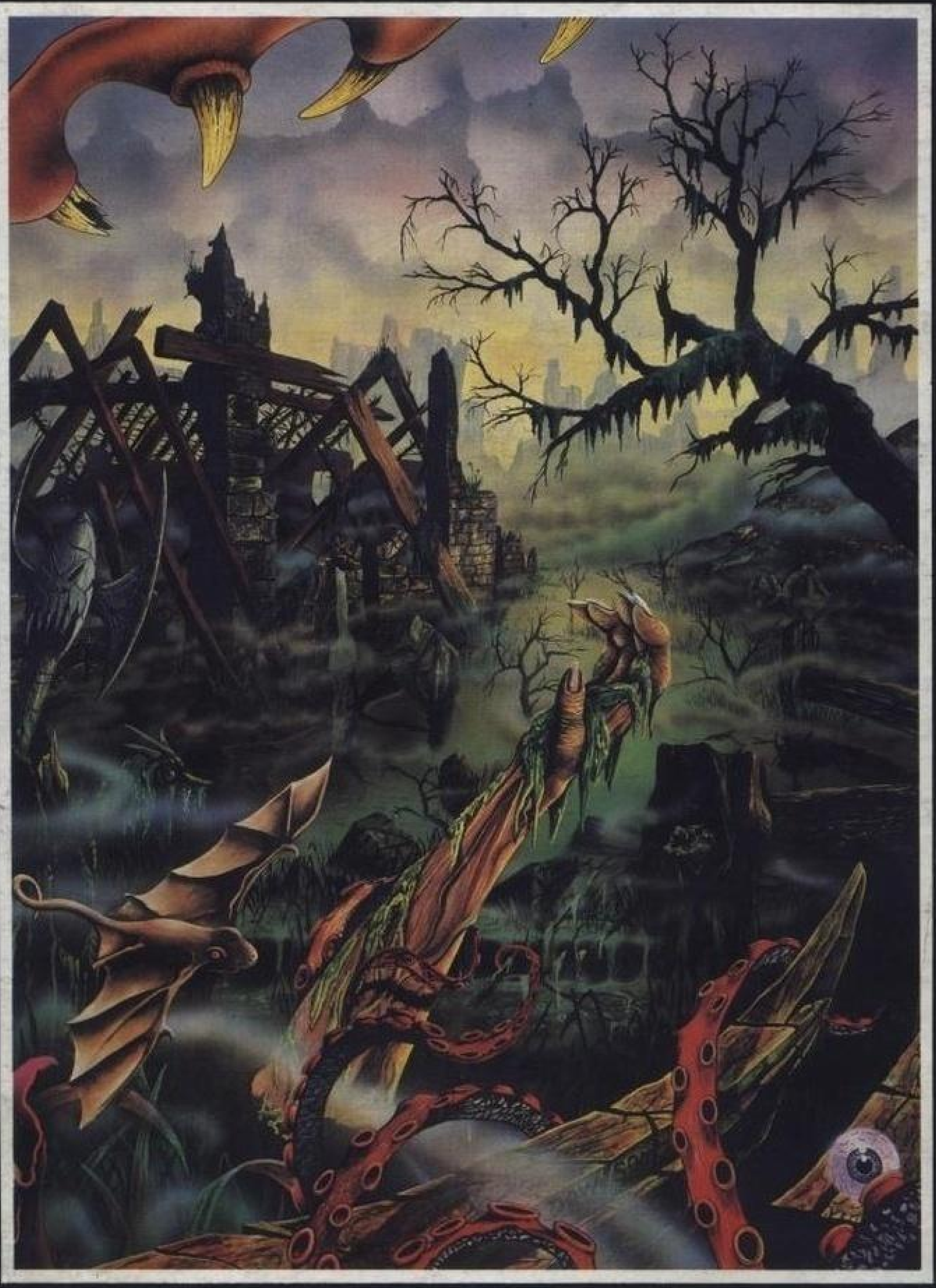

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